DISCOURSES OF NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

ON THE FIRST DECADE OF TITUS LIVY

M+D+XXXI

Translated by Leo Paul S. de Alvarez
University of Dallas, Irving, TX

Copyright 2006

All rights reserved. This material may not be quoted
or reproduced without written permission of the translator.
For private distribution only.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greeting 1
BOOK ONE
2
BOOK TWO
59
BOOK THREE 102

DISCOURSES OF NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI CITIZEN,

AND FLORENTINE SECRETARY, ON THE FIRST DECADE OF TITUS LIVY, TO

ZANOBI BUONDELMONTI AND COSIMO RUCELLAI.

M+D+XXXI

GREETING

I send you a present that, if it does not correspond to the obligations I have to you, it is without doubt the greatest that Niccolò Machiavelli has been able to send you. For in it I have expressed how much I know and have learned through a long practice and continual reading in the things of the world. And since neither you nor anyone else can desire more from me, you cannot be grieved if I have not given you more. You can well regret the poverty of my genius when these narrations of mine are poor, and the fallacious judgment when I, in many places deceive myself while reasoning.[1]That being so, I do not know which of us is less obliged to the other -- whether I to you, for having forced me to write that which I would never have written for myself; or you to me, if in writing I have not satisfied you. Take this then in that mode in which one takes all such things from friends, where one always considers the intention of the one who sends more than the quality of the thing that is sent. You should believe that I have one sole satisfaction in this: when I think that though I may have been deceived in many of its circumstances, in this alone I know that I have not made an error, in having chosen you, as those to whom above all others, these Discourses of mine are addressed; both because in doing so it seems to me to show some gratitude for benefits received, and because it seems to me a departure from the common usage of those who write, who usually always address their works to some prince, and blinded by ambition and avarice they praise him for all the virtuous qualities when they ought to have blamed him for every shameful part. Whence, then, in order not to incur this error, I have chosen not those who are princes, but those who by their infinite good parts would deserve to be; not those who could load me with rank, honors and riches, but those who are unable but would wish to do so. For men, if they wish to judge rightly, should esteem those who are liberal, not those who can be; and, likewise, those who know, and not those who govern a

[1] *discorrendo*

kingdom without knowing how. And the writers have praised Hiero of Syracuse[2] more when he was a private [man] than Perseus of Macedon[3] when he was king, for Hiero to be a prince lacked nothing but the principate; the other had no part of being a king except the kingdom. Enjoy then that good or bad that you yourselves have wished; and if you continue in the error of being pleased by these opinions of mine, I shall not fail to follow with the rest of the history as I promised you in the beginning. Farewell.

[2] Hiero II, tyrant of Syracuse (306-215 B.C). See *Prince*, VI and XIII.
[3] Son of Philip V and the last king of Macedonia (179-162 B.C.). On Philip V, see *Prince*, III and XXIV.

BOOK I

Preface

Although, because of the envious nature of men, it has always been no less dangerous to find new modes and orders than to discover unknown waters and lands, since men are more ready to blame than to praise the actions of others, nonetheless, spurred on by that natural desire that has always been in me to do without any respect those things that I believe incline to the common benefit of everyone, I have decided to enter upon a way not yet beaten[4] by anyone; which, if it brings me vexation and difficulty, can also bring me reward by means of those who will consider humanely[5] the end of these my labors. And if the poverty of genius, the little experience of present things, and the weakness of knowledge[6] about ancient [things], make this my attempt[7] defective and not very useful, it will at least give the way to someone who, with more virtue, more discourse and judgment, will be able to satisfy this intention of mine: which if it will not bring me praise, ought not beget me blame.

Having considered then how much honor is attributed to antiquity, and how many times, leaving aside infinite other examples, a fragment of an antique statue has been bought at great price [for someone] to have it near himself, honoring his house, and to have it imitated by those who take delight in that art, who then strive with great industry to reproduce it in all their works; and, on the other hand, one then sees that the most virtuous works the histories show, done by kingdoms and ancient republics, by kings, captains, citizens, legislators[8] and others who have labored for their fatherland, are sooner admired than imitated; rather, so much are they avoided by everyone in every least thing, that of ancient virtue there remains no sign whatever. I can do no other than at the same time marvel and grieve over it. Even more is this so, when I see in civil differences that arise among the citizens, or in the maladies that men incur, that they always have recourse to the judgments or remedies that were judged or ordered by the ancients: for the civil laws are nothing other than the judgments of ancient jurisconsults that, reduced to order, teach our present jurisconsults to judge.Nor is medicine anything other than the experiments done by ancient physicians, on which our present physicians found their judgments.

---

[4] Cf. *Prince*, VI, beg.
[2] *umanamente* -- humanely or humanly.
[3] *notizia* -- notice, in its obsolete sense.
[7] *conato* -- a weak exertion or attempt.
[8] *latori di leggi* – lit., bearers of laws.

Nonetheless, in ordering republics, maintaining states, governing kingdoms, ordering militia and administering war, judging subjects, increasing empire, one finds neither prince nor republic recurring to the examples of the ancients. I believe that this arises not so much from the weakness into which the present religion[9] has conducted the world, or that evil that an ambitious leisure has done to many Christian provinces and cities, but from not having a true knowledge of the histories, by not drawing out their sense in reading them nor by tasting in them that savor that they have in them. From which it arises that infinite [numbers] who read them take pleasure in hearing the variety of accidents that are contained in them, but without otherwise thinking of imitating them, judging imitation to be not only difficult but impossible; as if heaven, the sun, the elements, human beings, were changed in their motion, order and power from what anciently they were. Wishing then to draw men out of this error, I judged it necessary to write on all the books of Titus Livy that have not been intercepted by the malignity of the times that which I, according to the knowledge of ancient and modern things, shall judge to be necessary for the greater understanding of them, so that those who read these declarations of mine can more easily draw out that utility for which one should seek from the knowledge of the histories although this enterprise is difficult, nonetheless aided by those who have encouraged me to take up this burden, I believe to carry it in such a mode that for another there will remain a brief walk to conduct it to its destined place.

1. What have been universally the beginnings of any city whatsoever, and what was that of Rome.

Those who will read what the beginning was of the city of Rome, and by what legislators,[10] and of how it was ordered, will not marvel that so much virtue was maintained for so many centuries in that city; and that afterwards there would be born from her that imperium[11] which that republic attained. Wishing first to discourse of her birth, I say that all cities are built either by men native to the place where they are built or by foreigners. The first case occurs when it appears to the inhabitants, scattered in many and small places, that they do not live securely, each one not being able by itself, either because of the site or the small numbers, to resist the onset of whoever

[9] "The present education" (*la presente educazione)* in the 1531 Rome edition.
[10] *latori di leggi*
[11] *imperio* -- imperium, in its original meaning as command in war and the interpretation and execution of the law within the jurisdiction of that command. The Roman Republic attained to an imperium or a command over many peoples and lands.

attacks them.As to uniting for defense when the enemy comes, they are not in time; or if they are, they must needs abandon many of their redoubts; and thus they would soon fall prey to their enemies.Thus, in order to avoid these dangers, moved either by they themselves or by someone among them of greater authority, they are constrained to live together in a place chosen by them more commodious for living and easier to defend.

Of these, among many others, have been Athens and Venice.The first, under the authority of Theseus,[12] was for like causes built by the scattered inhabitants. The other, since there were many peoples reduced to certain islets at the end of the Adriatic Sea in order to find refuge from the wars, which daily arose in Italy because of the advent of new barbarians after the decline of the Roman imperium, they began among themselves, without any other particular prince who ordered them, to live under those laws which seemed to them most apt to maintain themselves.This succeeded happily for them because of the long leisure[13] that the site gave them, since it had no outlet to the sea, and since the peoples afflicting Italy had no navy with which to infest them, such that the least little beginning was able to bring them to that greatness that they now have.

The second case, when a city is built by foreign peoples, arises either from free men or from those dependent on others, as are colonies sent by a republic or a prince, either to relieve their lands of inhabitants or to defend a newly acquired country when they wish securely and without expense to maintain it.Of these cities the Roman People built a good many throughout the whole of their imperium.Or they are built by a prince not to live there but for his glory, as was the city of Alexandria by Alexander.[14]And because these cities do not have their beginning in liberty, rarely does it occur that they make great advances and can be numbered among the heads of kingdoms.Similar to these was the building of Florence, because (built either by the soldiers of Sulla or perchance by the inhabitants of the mountains of Fiesole, who, trusting in that long peace that was born in the world under Octavian, came down to live on the plain above the Arno) it was built under the Roman imperium, it was not able in its beginnings to make other augmentations than those that were conceded by the courtesy of the prince.

The builders of a city are free when some peoples, either under a prince or by themselves, are constrained either by disease, or hunger, or war, to abandon their native country and seek a new seat: these either inhabit cities which they find in countries they have acquired, as did Moses, or they

---

[12] See *Prince*, VI. Theseus's date is approximately 1200 B.C. Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* seems to be Machiavelli's source.

[3] *ozio* -- also, idleness.

[14] Alexander III, the Great (356-323 B.C.) of Macedon.

build anew as did Aeneas. This case is where one comes to know the virtue of the builders and the fortune of that which is built -- which is more or less marvellous, according as he who has been its beginning was more or less virtuous.His virtue is known in two modes: the first in the choice of the site, the other in the ordering of the laws.And because men work either by necessity or by choice, and because one sees that there is greater virtue where choice has less authority, it is to be considered whether it would be a better choice to build cities in sterile places, such that men would be constrained to be industrious and, less given to leisure, may live more united, having, because of the poverty of the site, fewer causes of discords, as it came to pass in Raugia[15] and in many other cities built in similar places.Such a choice without doubt would be wiser and more useful, if men would be contented to live off their own and not wish to seek to command others.Since men cannot secure themselves without power, it is necessary to avoid this sterility of the country and place themselves in very fertile places, where, enabled by the richness of the site to expand, they can defend themselves from whoever attacks them and to crush whoever might oppose their greatness.As for the leisure that such a site brings, one should order that the laws restrain the city to those necessities that the site does not, and to imitate those who have been wise and have dwelt in most pleasant and most fertile countries apt to produce lazy[16] men unfit for any virtuous exercise.In order to prevent the harms that the pleasantness of the country would have caused through leisure, [the wise] have laid a necessity to exercise on those who were to be soldiers, and of such quality that by this order they have become better soldiers in these countries than in those which are naturally harsh and sterile.Among these was the kingdom of the Egyptians, notwithstanding the very great pleasantness of that country, so powerful was that necessity ordained by the laws that it gave rise to most excellent men, and if their names had not been extinguished by antiquity, one would see how much they would merit more praise than Alexander the Great and others whose memory is still fresh.And he who would have considered the kingdom of the Sultan and the ordering of the Mamelukes and that militia of theirs before Selim, the Grand Turk, had extinguished them,[17]would have seen the many exercises for the soldiers, and he would have in fact known how they feared that leisure to which the benignity of the country could have conducted them, if they had not with the strongest laws prevented it.

---

[15] Ragusa in Dalmatia, which is now Dubrovnik.

[16] *oziosi*

[17] The Mamelukes ruled Egypt from 1252 and were defeated by the Turks under Selim I in 1516 who then annexed Egypt to the Ottoman Empire.

I say then that it is the more prudent choice to put oneself in a fertile place, when that fertility is restrained within proper limits by the laws.When Alexander the Great, wished to build a city for his glory, Deinocrates the architect came to [him] to show how he could build it on Mount Athos, a place which, besides being strong, could be reduced in such a mode that the city would have a human form, which would be a marvelous and rare thing, and worthy of his greatness.On Alexander's asking him what those inhabitants would live on, and the architect answering that he had not thought of it, Alexander laughed.[18]And letting the mountain stand he built Alexandria, where the inhabitants would willingly stay because the country was rich and the sea and the Nile convenient.He who will examine then the building of Rome, if he takes Aeneas to be her first progenitor, it will be of the cities built by foreigners; if Romulus, of those cities built by men native to the place.In either mode, he will see that she had a free beginning without being dependent on anyone; he will also see, as will be said below, to how many necessities the laws made by Romulus, Numa and others constrained her, such that the fertility of the site, the convenience of the sea, the frequent victories, the greatness of the empire, could not corrupt her for many centuries, and they maintained her so full of virtue, that there has never been another city and republic so adorned with as much.

Because the things performed, which Titus Livy celebrates, followed from either public or private counsel, either inside or outside the city, I shall begin by discoursing on those things that occurred inside and by public counsel that I shall judge worthy of greater note, adding to them all that depended on them; to these Discourses this first book, or in truth this first part, will be limited.

2. How many kinds of republics there are and which was the Roman Republic.

I wish to put aside the reasoning on those cities that have had their beginning under others, and I shall speak of those that had their beginning far from all external servitude but immediately governed themselves by their own will, either as a republic or principate; and just as these have had diverse beginnings so they have had diverse laws and orders.For some, either at the beginning or soon afterwards, were given their laws by one alone and at one stroke, as they were given by Lycurgus to the Spartans.Others have had them by chance, at many times and according to accidents, as did Rome.Happy

[18] The story is in Vitruvius, preface and II.1-4.

indeed one can call that republic from which [there can be] drawn[1] one man so prudent that the laws he gives are ordered in such a mode that without having need to correct them, it can live securely under them.One sees that Sparta observed them more than eight hundred years without corrupting them and without any dangerous tumult.And, on the contrary, that city has some degree of unhappiness which, not having fallen upon one prudent orderer, is necessitated to reorder itself; and of these even more unhappy is that which is farthest from order; and that is farthest which with its orders is wholly outside the direct road that could conduct it to the perfect and true end, because it is almost impossible that those that are in this rank would by some accident set themselves right.Those others that, if they do not have perfect order, have had a good beginning and are fit to become better, can become perfect by the occurrence of accidents.But this is very true, that they never reorder themselves without danger, for most men never agree with a new law regarding a new order in the city, if a necessity is not shown to them of a need to make it; and since this necessity does not come without danger, it is an easy thing for that republic to be ruined before it is conducted to a perfection of order.This the republic of Florence appears to confirm, for it was reordered by the accident of Arezzo in '02 and disordered by that of Prato in '12.[2]

Wishing then to discuss what were the orders of the city of Rome and the accidents that conducted her to perfection, I say that some who have written of republics say that there are in them one of three states, called by them the Principate, the Optimates, and the Popular, and that those who order a city ought to turn to one of these, according to what seems to them suitable to their purpose.Some others, and according to the opinion of many, the wiser, have the opinion that there are six principles[3] of government, of which three are the worst, three others good in themselves, but so easily corruptible that they also come to be pernicious.Those that are good are the three written above; those that are blameworthy are the three others, that proceed from these three, and each of these is in some mode similar to the one near it, that they easily leap from one to the other: for the Principate easily becomes tyrannical, the Optimates with ease become the state of the few, the Popular without difficulty converts to licentiousness.Hence if an orderer of the republic ordered one of these three states, he orders it for a

[1] *sortisce* -- to paraphrase: that republic is happy which is lucky enough to produce from itself a prudent man. Cp. the fortune drawn by Rome, below.
[2] In 1502, a rebellious Arezzo was retaken with the aid of French arms. In 1512, the sack of Prato by the Spanish opened the way for the return of the Medici who put an end to the Florentine republic.
[3] *ragioni* -- lit. reasons.

short time, for there is no remedy there that he can use to prevent it from slipping into its contrary because of the likeness in this case of virtue and vice.

These variations of government arise among men by chance,[4] for in the beginning of the world its inhabitants were few, and they lived for a time dispersed like beasts.Then the race multiplying, they gathered together, and to be able better to defend themselves they began to look up to one among them who, more robust and of greater heart, and they made him the head and obeyed him.Whence arose the knowledge of honest and good things as different from the pernicious and wicked; for the sight of one who injured his benefactor brought hatred and compassion among men; since they blamed the ungrateful and honored the one who was grateful.And, since they also thought that these same injuries could be done to them, in order to escape similar evil they were reduced to making laws, ordering punishments for those who contravened them; whence comes the knowledge of justice.This made it such that having afterwards elected a prince, men did not have recourse to the boldest, but to the one most prudent and most just.But afterwards when princes were established through inheritance and not through choice, the heirs immediately degenerated from their ancestors, and leaving aside virtuous actions they thought that princes did not have to do anything else but to surpass others in their sumptuousness and lasciviousness and every other quality of licentiousness.In such a mode that, the prince beginning to become hated, and [with his] becoming afraid because of this hatred, passing quickly from fear to doing injuries, there quickly arose a tyranny.From this there soon arose the beginnings of ruin and conspiracies, and plots against the prince, not carried out by those who were timid or weak, but by those who excelled others in their generosity, greatness of spirit,[5] richness and nobility, and who could not bear the dishonest life of that prince.The multitude then following the authority of these powerful ones armed themselves against the prince, and when he was extinguished [the multitude] obeyed them as their liberators.The latter, hating the name of one single head, constituted a government from themselves; and at the beginning they governed with regard to the past tyranny, and according to the laws ordained by them, putting their own advantage in the common utility, and they governed and conserved the private and public things with the highest diligence.The administration then coming afterwards to their sons who, not knowing the variations of fortune, not having experienced evil, and not wishing to stay content with civil equality, turned themselves to avarice,

[4] *caso* -- chance; also, as above, case.
[5] *animo*

ambition, the usurpation of women, making a government of Optimates become a government of the few, without having any respect for anything of civil life;[6] so that in a short time what happened to the tyrant happens to them; for their government becomes vexatious to the multitude who then are in service to anyone who plans in any mode to offend these governors, and hence there quickly arose someone who with the aid of the multitude extinguished them.The memory of the prince being still fresh and the injuries received from him, having dismantled the oligarchy and not wishing to re-establish the prince, they turn to the popular state, and order it in such a mode that neither the powerful few nor one prince might have any authority.And because all states in the beginning get some reverence, this popular state maintained itself for a while, but not for long.For the greater part of the generation that had ordered it having been extinguished, they quickly came to licentiousness, where neither public nor private men are feared -- in such quality that each living according to his own mode a thousand injuries are done every day; such that constrained by necessity, or by the suggestion of some good man, or to escape from such licentiousness, it returns anew to the principate; and from that, degree by degree, it goes again towards license, in the modes and for the causes said.

This is the cycle,[19] by whose gyrations all republics are governed and themselves govern; but rarely do they return to the same governments, for almost no republic can have such life that it could pass many times through these changes and remain on its feet.But it happens that in that travail a republic, since it will always be lacking in counsel and force, becomes subject to a neighboring state that is better ordered than it; but if this were not so, a republic would revolve for an infinite time in these governments.

I say then that all these given modes are pestiferous, because of the brevity of life that is in the three good, and the malignity that is in the three bad.Hence those who prudently order laws, having known this defect, avoiding each of these modes in itself, would chose one that would have participated in all, judging it to be firmer and more stable; for since there is in one and the same city the Principate, the Optimates, and the Popular government, the one would guard the other.

Among those who have by similar constitutions merited most praise is Lycurgus, who ordered his laws in this mode in Sparta, giving to the Kings, the Optimates and the People their parts, and he made a state that lasted more than eight hundred years, with the highest praise for him and quiet for the city.The contrary happened with Solon, who ordered the laws in

[6] *civiltà* -- the term refers to what belongs to politically ordered life, i. e., a civilized life.
[19] See Polybius, VI.10.

Athens.Having ordered there only the popular state, it was made with such brevity of life that before he died he saw the birth of Pisistratus's tyranny.And though forty years later his heirs were driven out and Athens returned to liberty, because she returned to the popular state according to the orders of Solon, she did not have more than a hundred years; even though to maintain herself she made many constitutions that Solon had not considered, by which the insolence of the great and the license of the universal might be repressed.Nonetheless because she did not mix the power of the Principate with that of the Optimates, Athens lived in comparison to Sparta a very short time.

But let us come to Rome, which, notwithstanding that she did not have a Lycurgus who would have ordered her in such a mode from the beginning, thus enabling her to live free for a long time, nonetheless, there were so many accidents that arose from the disunion between the Plebs and the Senate, that what had not been done by one orderer was done by chance.For if Rome did not draw the first fortune, she drew the second; for if her first orders were defective, nonetheless they did not deviate from the direct way that could conduct them to perfection.For Romulus and all the other Kings made many and good laws, yet conformable with the free life.But because their end was to found a kingdom and not a republic, when that city was left free she lacked many things that were necessary to order in favor of liberty, and which had not been ordered by these kings.When it came to pass that those kings of theirs lost the imperium through the causes and modes discussed, nonetheless those who drove them out immediately ordered two consuls who stood in place of the Kings; what came to be expelled from Rome was the name and not the royal power; such that, having in that republic the Consuls and the Senate, only two of three above-written qualities came to be mixed, that is, that of the Principate and the Optimates.It remained only to give a place to popular government.Whereupon the Roman Nobility having become insolent, for the causes that will be said below, the People rose up against it, such that in order not to lose the whole, it was constrained to concede to the People its part.And, on the other hand, the Senate and the Consuls retained such authority that they could keep their own rank in that republic.Thus the creation of the Tribunes of the plebs came about; after that creation the state of that republic came to be more stable, all the three qualities of government having their part.And she was much favored by fortune, for although she passed from the government of the Kings to the Optimates, and to the People, through the same degrees and for the same causes that are discussed above, nonetheless the authority of the royal quality was not wholly taken

away by granting authority to the Optimates, nor was the authority of the Optimates wholly diminished by giving it to the People; but remaining mixed, it made a perfect republic, to which perfection she came through the disunion between the Plebs and the Senate, as will be demonstrated at length in the next two following chapters.

3. What accidents led to the creation in Rome of the Tribunes of the plebs, which made the republic more perfect.

As all those demonstrate who reason on the civil life, and as every history is full ofexamples, it is necessary for whoever disposes of a republic and orders laws in it to presuppose that all men are wicked, and that they always put into use the malignity of their mind[20] whenever they might have a free occasion; and when any malignity is hidden for a time, it proceeds from a hidden cause, which is not known because there has been no experience seen of the contrary;but time, which they say is the father of every truth, will discover it.

It seemed that there was a very great union in Rome between the Plebs and the Senate, the Tarquins having been driven out,[21] and that the Nobles had put aside their pride and become of the popular mind and could be endured with by anyone, even by the lowest.This deceit was concealed, nor was the cause seen so long as the Tarquins lived, the Nobility fearing them; and being afraid that [the Plebs] if ill-treated would not ally with them, they bore themselves humanely towards them.But as soon as the Tarquins were dead, and the fear of the Nobles was gone, they began to spit out against the Plebs the venom that they had kept in their breast, and they offended it in all the modes that they could.[22]This thing is testimony to that which I have said above, that men never do any good except by necessity;but where choice abounds, and where one can use license, everything is at once full of confusion and disorder.Therefore it is said that hunger and poverty make men industrious, and that laws make them good. Where a thing of itself works well without law, then law is not necessary;but where such a good custom is lacking, at once then is law necessary.Hence without the Tarquins, the fear of whom reined in the Nobles, it was needful to think of a new order that would have the same effect as the Tarquins had when they lived.Wherefore, after many confusions, tumults, and dangers of scandals that arose between the Plebs and the Nobility, they came, for the security of the

[20] *animo*
[21] Livy, I 58-60.
[22] Livy, II 5,9,21.

People, to the creation of Tribunes;[23] and these were ordered with such pre-eminence and such reputation that they were always able afterwards to be mediators between the Plebs and the Senate, and to obviate the insolence of the Nobles.

4. That the disunion of the Plebs and the Roman Senate made that republic free and powerful.

I do not wish to fail to discourse on those tumults that occurred in Rome from the death of the Tarquins to the creation of the Tribunes,[24] and afterwards on some other things against the opinion of many who say that Rome had been a tumultuous republic and full of such confusion that if good fortune and military virtue had not supplied her defects, she would have been inferior to every other republic.I cannot deny that fortune and militia were causes of the Roman imperium, but it certainly appears that they do not perceive that where there is good militia there must needs be good order and rarely does it then occur that there would not also be good fortune.But let us come to other particulars of that city.I say that it seems to me that those who condemn the tumults between the Nobles and the Plebs blame those things that were the first cause of keeping Rome free, and they consider the noises and the shouts that arose from such tumults more than the good effects they begot; and they do not consider that in every republic there are two diverse humors, that of the people and that of the great,[25] and that all the laws made favorable to liberty arise from their disunion, as one may easily see in what followed in Rome.For from the Tarquins to the Gracchi, which was more than three hundred years, the tumults of Rome rarely begot exile, and very rarely blood.One cannot therefore judge tumults harmful nor a republic divided, that in such length of time sent no more than eight or ten citizens into exile because of these differences, killed very few, and imposed fines on not many more.Nor can one call with reason a republic disordered in any mode, where there are so many examples of virtue, because good examples arise from good education, good education from good laws, and good laws from the tumults that many inconsiderately condemn.For if one will examine well the end of these, he will find that they have not begotten any exile or violence unfavorable to the common good, but laws and orders beneficial to public liberty.And if someone would say --the modes were extraordinary and almost savage: to see the People shouting together against the Senate, the

[23] Livy, II 33.
[24] Livy, II 23-24, 27-33.
[25] *Prince*, IX.

Senate against the People running tumultuously in the street, closing shops, the Plebs all leaving Rome, all of which things frighten one who only reads of them -- I say that every city ought to have its own modes and through which the people can purge its ambition, and especially in those cities where they wish to make use of the people in the important things.Among these the city of Rome had this mode, that when the people wished to obtain a law, either it did one of the things said above or it would not give its name to going to war, such that to placate it, it was needful in some part to satisfy it.And the desires of free peoples are rarely pernicious to liberty, for either they arise out of being oppressed, or from the suspicion [that they might] be oppressed.Should these opinions be false, the remedy is the assemblies, from which some man of good can emerge who, [by an] oration, demonstrates to them how they are deceived.And, as Tully says, although ignorant they are capable of truth, and easily yield when a man worthy of faith has said to them the truth.[26]

One should then more sparingly blame the government of Rome, and consider that the many good effects that issued from that republic were caused only by the best causes.And if the tumults were the cause of the creation of the Tribunes, they merit the highest praise, for besides giving the popular part its share in administration, they were constituted as a guard of Roman liberty, as the following chapter will show.

5. Where one may more securely place the guard of liberty, in the people or the great; and who has greater cause to [make] tumult, those wishing to acquire or those wishing to maintain.

Those who have prudently constituted a republic have constituted a guard for liberty as among the most necessary things they have ordered, and, according as to whether this is well-placed, that free life is more or less lasting.Because in every republic there are men of the great and of the people,[27] it has been doubted into whose hands that guard is better placed.With the Lacedaemonians, and in our times with the Venetians, it has been put in the hands of the Nobles; but with the Romans it was put in the hands of the Plebs.

It is therefore necessary to examine which of these republics had the better choice.If one goes according to reasons, there is something to be said for each part; but if one would examine their end, one would choose the part of the nobles, because the liberty of Sparta and Venice had a longer life than

[26] Cicero, *De Amicitia*, XXV 95.
[27] *uomini grandi e popolari*

that of Rome.Coming to reasons I say, taking first the part of the Romans, how one ought to place on guard over a thing those who have less appetite to usurp it.Without doubt if one will consider the end of the nobles and that of the ignobles,[28] one will see in the former a great desire to dominate and in the latter only a desire not to be dominated, and consequently more desire to live free, being less able than the great to hope to usurp it; such that if those who are popular are posted as guardian of a liberty, it is reasonable that they would have more care; and not being able themselves to seize it, they will not permit others to seize it.As for the other part, whoever defends the Spartan and Venetian order says that those who place the guard in the hands of those who are powerful do two good works.One, they satisfy the ambition of those who, having more part in the republic by having this stick in hand, have cause for contenting themselves more; the other, that they take away a quality of authority from the restless minds[29] of the Plebs, which is the cause of infinite dissensions and scandals, and apt to reduce the Nobility to that desperation that in time has evil effects.And they give for example that same Rome in which, with the Tribunes of the Plebs having this authority in their hands, it did not suffice for them to have a plebeian consul, for they wanted to have both.After this they wanted the Censorship, the Praetorship, and all the other ranks [that had] imperium in the city.Nor yet did this suffice, for led by that same fury they then began in time to adore those men whom they saw as apt to batter down the Nobility; from whence arose the power of Marius and the ruin of Rome.And truly the one who would discourse well on the one and the other thing could stand in doubt as to who should be elected as the guard of such liberty, not knowing which of these humors of man might be more harmful in a republic: that which desires to maintain the honor already acquired, or that which desires to acquire that which it does not have.

In the end whoever will subtly examine everything will come to this conclusion: either you reason of a republic that wishes to make an empire, like Rome, or of one for whom it suffices to maintain itself. In the first case it is necessary for it to do everything as did Rome; in the second, it can imitate Venice and Sparta, for these causes, and for those that will be said in the following chapter.

But to turn to discuss which men are more harmful in a republic, those who desire to acquire or those who fear losing that which has been acquired, I say that Marcus Menenius having been created Dictator and Marcus Fulvius Master of horse, both plebeian, in order that they might look into certain

[28] *ignobili* -- i.e., the commoners.
[29] *animi*

conspiracies had been made in Capua against Rome, were also given authority by the people to investigate whoever in Rome, by ambition and extraordinary modes, might devise to gain the consulate and the other honors of the city.[30]Since it seemed to the Nobility that such authority given to the Dictator was [directed] against them, they spread it through Rome that it was not the nobles who were seeking honors by ambition and extraordinary modes but the ignobles who, not having confidence in their blood and virtue, sought by extraordinary ways to gain these ranks, and they accused the Dictator in particular.So powerful was that accusation that Menenius called an assembly and complaining of the calumnies given out by the Nobles, stepped down from the dictatorship and placed himself under the judgment that the People might make; and, after his cause was debated, he was absolved. It was much disputed there as to who was more ambitious, he who wishes to maintain or he who wishes to acquire, for the one or the other appetite can easily be the cause of very great tumults.Yet, nonetheless, they are most often caused by those who possess, for fear of losing generates in them the same wishes that are in those who desire to acquire; for it does not appear to men that they could possess securely that which man has, if he does not acquire anew something else.Besides, there is this, that possessing much, they can with greater power and greater motion make an alteration.And there is still this besides, that their unrestrained and ambitious behavior kindles in the breasts of those who do not possess the wish to possess, either to get revenge against them by despoiling them, or to be able also themselves to enter upon those riches and honors that they see being ill-used by others.

6. Whether one could have ordered a State in Rome that would have taken away the enmities between the People and the Senate.

We have discoursed above on the effects produced by the controversies between the People and the Senate.Now since these continued until the time of the Gracchi, when they were the cause of the ruin of the free life, one might desire that Rome produce the great effects she did, without having such enmities.It seemed to me a thing worthy of consideration to see whether in Rome one could have ordered a state that took away these aforesaid controversies.Turning to examine this question, it is necessary to recur to those republics that were free for a long time without such enmities and tumults, and to see what state they had in them, and whether it could be introduced in Rome.As an example from among the

[30] Livy, IX 26.

ancients, there is Sparta; from the moderns, Venice -- as have been named above by me. Sparta made a King with a small Senate to govern her. Venice did not divide the government with names, but under one appellation all those who were able to administer were called Gentlemen.That mode was given more by chance than by the prudence of those who gave them laws, for many inhabitants being cast upon those shoals where that city now stands, for the causes said above, they had grown to such numbers that to wish to live together it was needful that they make laws ordering a form of government.And, often convening together in councils to deliberate on the city, when it seemed to them that the numbers sufficed for a political life, they closed the way of being able to participate in the government to others who newly came to live there.And, in time, finding that there were quite a number of inhabitants of the place outside the government, in order to give reputation to those who governed, they called the latter Gentlemen and the others the Populace.[31]This mode could arise and maintain itself without tumults, for when it first arose anyone who then lived in Venice was made [part of] the government, such that nobody could complain.Those who afterwards came there to live, finding the state established and completed, had neither cause nor opportunity to make a tumult.There was no cause, for they had had nothing taken from them; there was no opportunity, for those who ruled kept them in check, and did not employ them in things where they could take authority. Besides this, those who came afterwards to inhabit Venice were not many, nor of such a number that there would be a disproportion between those who governed and those who were governed; for either the number of Gentlemen either is equal to them or is superior; hence, for these causes, Venice could order that state and keep it united.

Sparta, as I have said, being governed by a King and a limited Senate, could maintain herself thus for a long time since there were in Sparta few inhabitants, having blocked the way to those who might come there to live;and having held the laws of Lycurgus with reputation, the observance of which took away all causes of tumults, they were able to live united a long time, for Lycurgus with his laws made in Sparta more of an equality of substance[32] and less of an equality of rank;for there existed there an equal poverty, and the plebs lacked ambition, for the ranks of the city were extended to few citizens and were kept distant from the plebs, nor did the nobles by treating them badly ever give them the desire to have these.This arose from the Spartan Kings who, having been placed in that principate in the midst of that Nobility, had no better remedy whereby they might hold

[31] *Gentiluomini, Popolani*
[32] *sustanze* -- lit., substances; also, property

firm their dignity than to keep the Plebs defended from every injury; that made it such that the Plebs neither feared nor desired imperium; and not having imperium nor having fear, the rivalry they could have had with the Nobility was taken away and the cause of tumults, and they could live united a long time.But two principal things caused this union: one being the few inhabitants of Sparta, and because of this they could be governed by few; the other that not receiving foreigners into their republic they did not have occasion either to corrupt themselves or increase so much that it would have been unsupportable for the few who governed it.

Considering then all these things, one sees how it was necessary for the legislators of Rome to do one of two things to wish that Rome stand as quiet as the aforesaid republics: either not to use the plebs in war like the Venetians, or not to open the way to foreigners like the Spartans. And they did both, which gave the plebs forces and increase, and infinite occasions for tumults.But the Roman state becoming quieter, there would have followed this inconvenience: that it would also have been weaker, for the way whereby it could come to that greatness that it reached would have been cut off from it.In that mode, Rome wishing to remove the causes of tumults would also have removed the causes of expansion.And in all human things one sees this, whoever will examine them well, that one can never cancel one inconvenience so that another does not arise.Therefore if you should wish to make a people numerous and armed, in order to make a great empire, you make it of such quality that you cannot afterwards manage it in your mode; if you keep it small or disarmed to be able to manage it, if you acquire dominion, you cannot keep it, or you become so vile that you are prey for whoever assaults you; and therefore in all our deliberations one ought to consider where there are fewer inconveniences, and to take the better part, for one will never find that which is wholly clear and wholly without suspicion.Rome then could have, like Sparta, made a prince for life and a small Senate; but could not, like her, prevent increasing the number of its citizens, since she wished to make a great empire; such that to have established a King for life and a small number in the Senate would have availed her little with respect to unity.

If someone would wish, therefore to order a republic anew, he would have to examine whether he wished to expand dominion and power like Rome, or truly to stay within narrow limits.In the first case, it is necessary to order it like Rome and to give place to tumults and universal dissensions as best as one can, for never will a republic grow, or if it grows maintain itself, without a great number of men and well-armed. In the second case, one can order it like Sparta and like Venice; but because to expand is poison to

suchlike republics, he who orders them ought, in all those modes he can, prohibit them from acquiring; for acquisitions founded on a weak republic are wholly its ruin, as it came to pass in Sparta and Venice: of which, the first having subjugated almost the whole of Greece, showed in one very slight accident the weakness of her foundation; because, when upon the rebellion of Thebes, caused by Pelopidas, the other cities themselves rebelled, that republic was wholly ruined. Similarly, Venice having seized a great part of Italy, and mostly by money and astuteness and not by war, when she had to make a test of her forces lost everything in one battle.I would well believe that to establish a republic that would last a long time one would take the mode of ordering it within like Sparta or Venice, putting it in a strong place and with such power that no one would believe that it could immediately be overwhelmed; and on the other hand not to make it so great that it would be formidable to its neighbors; and thus it could enjoy its state for a long time.For there are two causes of making war on a republic -- one to become its lord, and the other the fear that it might seize you.The aforesaid mode takes away these two causes almost entirely; for if it is difficult to conquer, as I presuppose it to be, since its defenses are well-ordered, rarely or never will it happen that one could think about acquiring it.And if it will stay within its limits, and one sees by experience that it is not ambitious, it will never happen that one would make war against it [because] of fear; especially if it would in its constitution or laws prohibit expansion.And without doubt I believe that being able to keep things balanced in this mode, that it would be the true political life and the true quiet of a city.But all the things of man being in motion and not being able to stand solidly, it must needs be that they rise or fall, and many things that reason does not lead you to do, you are led to do by necessity; so that having ordered a republic able to maintain itself, not expanding, and necessity would lead it to expand, we should see its foundations done away with and that it is very quickly brought to ruin.Now, on the other hand, if Heaven would be so kind that it would not have to make war, it would arise that leisure would make it effeminate or divided; which two things together, or each one by itself, would be a cause of its ruin.Since, then, one is not able, as I believe, to balance this thing, nor to maintain an exact middle way, one must in ordering the republic think of the more honorable part, and order it in such a mode that when necessity then leads it to expand, it would be able to do so and keep that which it has seized.And to return to the first reasoning, I believe that it is necessary to follow Roman order and not that of the other republics; for to find a mode in the middle between the one and the other, I do not believe is possible;and as for those enmities that arise between the people and the senate, to tolerate

them, taking them as one inconvenience necessary to arrive at Roman greatness.For besides the other reasons stated, where the tribunician authority was shown to be necessary as the guard of liberty, one can easily consider the benefit to a republic of the authority of accusation which, among others, was vested in the Tribunes, as the following chapter will discuss.

7.How much accusations are necessary in a Republic to maintain it in liberty.

To those who in a city are appointed to guard its liberty, one cannot give a more useful and necessary authority than that of being able to accuse citizens before the people, or whatsoever magistrate or council, whenever they have sinned in anything against the free state.This order brings about two effects most useful in a republic.The first is that the citizens, for fear of being accused, will not be tempted to things against the State; and if tempted they are immediately made incontinent and without respect suppressed:the other is that it gives a way to purge in some mode those humors that arise in cities, against some citizen.When these humors are not purged ordinarily, they resort to extraordinary modesthat wholly ruin a republic.Hence nothing makes a republic more stable and firm than to order in some mode that the alterations that agitate these humors have a way of being purged, ordered by the laws.One can illustrate this by many examples, and especially by that which Titus Livy adduces of Coriolanus, where he says that the Roman Nobility being irritated against the Plebs, since the Plebs appeared to have too much authority through the creation of the Tribunes who defended them; and Rome having, as it happened, come into a great scarcity of food, and the Senate having sent for grain in Sicily, Coriolanus, [who was] inimical to the popular faction, counseled that the time had come when they could punish the Plebs and take away that authority that they had assumed to the prejudice of the Nobility, keeping them famished and not distributing the cereal; that pronouncement having come to the ears of the People, it came into such an indignation against Coriolanus, that on leaving the Senate he would have been tumultuously killed, if the Tribunes had not cited him to appear to defend his cause.[33]One notes from this accident that which is said above: how useful and necessary it is that republics with their laws give a way of purging the wrath that the universality conceives against a single citizen; because when these ordinary modes are not there, one recurs to the extraordinary, and without doubt the latter produce far worse effects than the former.

[33] Livy, II 33-40.

For if a citizen is oppressed ordinarily, even if wrong is done to him, there follows little or no disorder in the republic; for the execution is carried out without private forces and without foreign forces, which are the ruin of the free life; but it is carried out with public forces and orders, that have particular limits and do not transcend to a thing that ruins the republic.As to corroborating this opinion with examples, I wish that of Coriolanus to suffice for ancient [ones], and everyone might consider how much evil might have occurred to the Roman republic if he had been killed tumultuously; for there would have arisen wrongs done by private [men] one to another, which wrongs generate fear; fear looks for defenses, and partisans are procured for defense, from partisans arises parties in cities, from parties the ruin of these.But since the thing was governed by means of one who had authority over it, it took away all those evils that could have arisen had it been governed with private authority.

We have seen in our times what novelty has been done in the republic of Florence, the multitude not being able to vent its animus[34]ordinarily against one of its citizens, as happened in the time of Francesco Valori who was like a prince of the city; he was judged ambitious by many, and a man who wished with his audacity and spiritedness[35] to transcend the civil life, and since there was no way in the republic by which one might resist him except by a sect contrary to his, it arose that since he feared nothing except extraordinary modes, he began to gather supporters who would defend him; and on the other hand those who opposed him not having an ordinary way to repress him, thought of extraordinary ways, such that they came to arms. If one could have opposed him by the ordinary, his authority would have been extinguished with harm to him alone; instead, having been extinguished by the extraordinary, there followed harm not only to him but also to many other noble citizens.One might also allege, in sustaining the conclusion written above, the accident that also happened in Florence concerning Piero Soderini, which happened wholly because there was not in that republic any mode of bringing an accusation against the ambition of powerful citizens: for the accusation of a powerful one before eight judges does not suffice in a republic; it must needs be that there be many judges, for the few always act in the mode of the few.Such that, if these modes had been there, either the citizens would have accused him, if he were living wickedly, and by this means, without having to make the Spanish come, they would have vented their animus;and not living wickedly, they would not have dared to work

[34] *animo*
[35] *animosità*

against him, for fear of being accused themselves, and thus in either case that appetite would have ceased to be a cause of scandal.

One can then come to this conclusion, that whenever one sees that outside forces have been called in by one party of men who live in a city, one can believe that it arises from its wicked orders, by its not having within that circle [the] order that could without extraordinary modes vent the malignant humors that arise in men; for which one can wholly provide by ordering there accusations before many judges and giving reputation to them.These modes were so well-ordered in Rome that in many dissensions between the Plebs and the Senate, never did either the Senate or the Plebs, or any particular citizen plan to make use of outside forces;for having the remedy at home, they were not necessitated to go to that outside.And although the examples written above have surely sufficed to prove it, nonetheless I wish to adduce one other, recited by Titus Livy in his history.[36]He tells how there had been in Chiusi, a most noble city of those times in Tuscany, one. Lucumone, who violated a sister of Aruns, and Aruns not being able to avenge himself because of the power of the violator, he went to find the French, who reigned in that place which is now called Lombardy, and these he encouraged to come with arms in hand to Chiusi, showing them how to their advantage they could avenge the injury received.If Aruns had seen how he was able to avenge himself with the modes of the city, he would not have sought barbarian forces.But as accusations are useful in a republic, so calumnies are useless and harmful, as we shall discourse upon in the following chapter.

8. As much as accusations are useful to republics, so much are calumnies pernicious.

Notwithstanding that the virtue of Furius Camillus, when he had freed Rome from the oppression of the French, had made all the citizens of Rome yield to him, without its appearing that reputation or rank had been taken from them, nonetheless Manlius Capitolinus could not bear that such rank and glory would be attributed to him, since it appeared to [Manlius] that as for the safety of Rome he merited as much as Camillus for having saved the Capitol; and as for other martial praises he was not inferior to him.Such that, burdened by envy, he could not quieten himself because of the glory of the other, and seeing that he could not sow discord among the Patricians, he turned to the Plebs sowing various sinister opinions among them.And among

[4] Livy, V 33.

other things, he said that the treasure gathered together to give to the French had then not been given to them but was usurped by private citizens, and if recovered could be converted to public utility, relieving the Plebs of taxes or of whatever private debt.These words were quite powerful with the Plebs, such that they began to hold meetings and to make many tumults in the city as they pleased; since this thing was displeasing to the Senate and since it appeared to be of moment and dangerous, a Dictator was created to look into this case and check the impetus of Manlius.Whence the Dictator immediately had him cited.They were conducted to meet one another in public, the Dictator in the midst of the Nobility and Manlius in the midst of the Plebs.Manlius was told that he ought to say who had this treasure of which he spoke, for the Senate was as desirous as the Plebs to know this.Manlius did not respond with particulars, but kept evading them, saying that it was not necessary to tell them that which they already knew, such that the Dictator put him in prison.[37]

One notes from this text how detestable, in free cities and every other mode of life, are calumnies, and how, to repress them, one ought not spare any order that would be to the purpose.Nor can there be a better order for closing the way [to calumnies], than to open many places for accusations, for accusations are as advantageous to republics as calumnies harm them; and from one side to the other there is this difference, that calumnies have no need of either testimony or of any other particular evidence to prove them, such that anyone can be calumniated by anyone; but one cannot be so accused, since accusations need true evidence and circumstances that show the truth of the accusation.Men are accused to magistrates, peoples and councils; they are calumniated in piazzas and loggias.One uses calumny more where accusation is used less, and where cities are less ordered to receive them. Therefore the orderer of a republic should order it such that any citizen in that [republic] can accuse without any fear and without any respect; and when this is done and is observed well, he ought to punish calumniators harshly -- who cannot complain when they are punished, since there are places open to hear accusations of those whom they have calumniated in the loggias.Where this part is not well-ordered, great disorders always follow; for calumnies irritate but do not punish citizens; and the irritated think of getting their own back, hating much more rather than fearing the things said against them.

This part, as was said, was well-ordered in Rome, and has always been badly ordered in our city of Florence.As this order in Rome did much good, so in Florence this disorder has done much ill.Whoever reads the histories of

37Livy, VI 11,14-16.

this city will see how many calumnies at all times have been given out to its citizens who have been employed in the important things of that [republic].Of one they said that he had stolen the money of the Commune; of another that he had not won in an enterprise because he had been corrupted; and of another that by his ambition he had done this or that disadvantage [to the city].From whence it came that from every side there arose hatred, from which came divisions, from divisions sects, and from sects ruin.Had there been in Florence an order for accusing citizens and punishing calumniators, infinite scandals would not have followed that did follow; for those citizens, whether they had been condemned or acquitted, would not have been able to harm the city; and there would have been far fewer accused than those who would have been calumniated, since one cannot, as I said, accuse everyone as one can calumniate.Among other things that some citizen employs to come to greatness have been these calumnies; which used against powerful citizens who oppose themselves to his appetite do much for him; for taking the part of the People, and conforming himself to the bad opinion the latter have of the former, he makes it friendly.Although one can adduce many examples, I wish to be content with only one.The Florentine army was in the field at Lucca, commanded by Messer Giovanni Guicciardini, its commissioner.It came to pass that either by the badness of his government or the badness of his fortune, that the conquest of the city did not come about.Whichever was the case, Messer Giovanni was blamed, since it was said that he been corrupted by the Lucchese.Since that calumny was a favorite of his enemies, Messer Giovanni was led almost to ultimate despair.For although to justify himself he wished to put it in the hands of the Captain, nonetheless he was not able ever to justify himself, for there were no modes in that republic to do so.Whence there arose much indignation among the friends of Messer Giovanni, who were the majority of the great men, and among those who desired to make innovations in Florence.And for this and other similar causes, this thing grew so much that there followed the ruin of that republic.

Manlius Capitolinus was thus a calumniator and not an accuser, and the Romans showed in this very case how calumniators should be punished.For one ought to make them become accusers, and when the accusation is found to be true, either to reward them or not punish them; but when it is not found to be true, to punish them as Manlius was punished.

9. How necessary it is to be alone to wish to order a republic anew, or to reform it wholly outside its ancient orders.

Perhaps it will appear to someone that I have gone too far in Roman history without my having made any mention as yet of the orderers of that republic or of those orders that concern religion or the militia.Therefore, not wishing to hold any more in suspense the minds[38] of those who wish to learn some things about this part, I say that many perchance will judge it a bad example that a founder of a free life, which Romulus was, should have first killed his brother[39] and then consented to the death of Titus Tatius, the Sabine,[40]chosen by him to be his companion in the kingdom; judging from this that their citizens, could with the authority of their prince, through ambition and desire to command, harm those who would oppose their authority.This opinion would be true, if one would not consider the end which had induced him to commit such a homicide.

And this should be taken as a general rule, that never or rarely does it occur that some republic or kingdom would be well-ordered in its beginning, or reformed altogether anew outside of its ancient orders, when it is not ordered by one; on the contrary, it is necessary that he who gives the mode and on whose mind[41] depends all like ordinances be one alone.Therefore a prudent orderer of a republic, who is of a mind[42] to wish not to benefit himself but the common good, not his own succession but the common fatherland, ought to contrive to have authority alone; nor will a wise contriver[43] ever censure anyone for any extraordinary action that is used for ordering a kingdom or constituting a republic.For it is quite fitting that if the fact accuses him, the effect excuses him; and when it is good as was that of Romulus, it will always excuse him, for it is he who is violent to destroy, not he who mends, who ought to be censured.He ought then be so prudent and virtuous, that the authority he has taken is not left as an inheritance to another; for men being more prone to evil than to good, his successor could use ambitiously that which had been virtuously used by him.Besides which, if one is apt for ordering, the order will not last long if it remains on the shoulders of one, but will indeed do so if it is in the care of many and its maintenance depends on many.For if many are not apt to order a thing, by not knowing the good that is in it, caused by the diverse opinions among them, when they have known it they will not agree to abandon it.That Romulus was of those who, in the death of his brother and colleague, merits excuse; and that what he did was for the common good and not for his own

[38] *animi*
[39] Livy, I 7.
[40] Livy, I 14.
[41] *mente*
[42] *animo*
[43] *uno ingegno savio*

ambition, he demonstrated by having immediately ordained a Senate with whom he consulted and according to whose opinions he would deliberate.He who will consider well the authority that Romulus reserved for himself will see that he reserved for himself only the command of the army, when he was deliberating war, and the convoking of the Senate.One will then see that when Rome became free after the expulsion of the Tarquins, the Romans innovated no order of the old [regime], except that in place of a perpetual King they elected two annual Consuls.[44]This testifies that all the beginning orders of that city were conformable more to a civil and free life than to one absolute and tyrannical.

One could give in support of the things written above infinite examples, such as Moses, Lycurgus, Solon and other founders of kingdoms and republics, who could, by having attributed to themselves an authority, form laws appropriate to the common good; but I wish to omit them as a thing well-known.I shall adduce only one, not so celebrated, but worth considering by those who would desire to be orderers of good laws: and that is when Agis, king of Sparta, desired to reduce the Spartans to those limits that the laws of Lycurgus had enclosed them; for it seemed to him that having deviated from them in part, his city had lost much of that ancient virtue and, in consequence, forces and imperium.He was killed in his first beginnings by the Spartan ephors as a man who wished to seize the tyranny.[45]But the same desire arose in Cleomenes when he succeeded [Agis] in the kingdom, because of the records and writings of Agis that he had found wherein he saw what was [Agis's] mind[46] and intention, [and he] knew that he could not do this good for his fatherland unless he became the sole authority; for it seemed to him that because of the ambition of men he could not be useful to many against the will of the few.He took a convenient occasion, had all the ephors killed and whoever else could contest him, he then wholly renewed the laws of Lycurgus.[47]This deliberation was apt for making Sparta rise again and for giving Cleomenes that reputation Lycurgus had, if it had not been for the power of the Macedonians and the weakness of the other Greek republics.For, after his ordering, being attacked by the Macedonians, and finding his forces inferior by themselves, and having no one with whom he could seek refuge, he was conquered; and it remained that his plan, however just and laudable, was not perfected.

---

[44] Livy, I 58-60.
[45] Plutarch, *Agis*, 7-20.
[46] *mente*
[47] Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, I-10, 26-29.

Considering then all these things, I conclude that it is necessary to be alone to order a republic; and for the death of Remus and Titus Tatius, Romulus merits excuse and not blame.

10. Insomuch as the founders of a republic or of a kingdom are praiseworthy, so much are those of a tyranny blameworthy.

Among men who are praised, the most praised are heads or orderers of religions.Next after [them are] those who have founded either republics or kingdoms. After these those who are celebrated are those who, placed before armies have expanded either their kingdom or that of their fatherland.To the latter men of letters are conjoined --and because these are of different qualities,[48]they are each one of them celebrated according to his rank.And to any other man, the number of whom is infinite, who adds to his art or practise some part of praise is attributed.On the contrary, infamous and detestable are men who are destroyers of religions, dissipators of kingdoms and republics, enemies of virtue, of letters, and of every other art that adds utility and honor to the human generation, such as are the impious, the violent, the ignorant, the worthless, the idle, the cowardly.No one will ever be so foolish or so wise, so bad or so good, who, if the choice is placed before him of these two qualities of men, will not praise that which is to be praised and blame that which is to be blamed.Yet in the end, almost all, deceived by a false good and a false glory, let themselves go, either voluntarily or ignorantly, into the ranks of those who merit more blame than praise.Though able to establish, to their perpetual honor, either a republic or a kingdom, they turn to tyranny, nor do they see by this part how much fame, glory, honor, security, quiet, and satisfaction of mind they abandon, and how much infamy, ignominy, blame, danger and disquietude they incur.

It is impossible that those who in a private state live in a republic, or who through either fortune or virtue become princes of it, if they read histories, or make capital of the memories of ancient things, would not wish to live as private [men] in their fatherland sooner as Scipios than Caesars, and of those who are princes, sooner as Agesilauses, Timoleons, Dions, than Nabises, Phalarises, and Dionysiuses.For they would see the latter highly abused, and the former exceedingly praised.They would also see how Timoleon and the others did not have in their fatherland less authority than did Dionysius and Phalaris, but they would see that by far they had more security.

---

[48] *di più ragioni* -- that is, of different species or kinds.

Nor should anyone be deceived by the glory of Caesar, when hearing him celebrated to the highest by writers, for those who praise him are either corrupted by his fortune or terrified by the duration of imperium, which, since it was ruled under that name, did not permit writers to speak freely of him.But he who wishes to know what free writers would say should see that which they say of Catiline.And Caesar is so much the more blameworthy, as much as he who has done evil is more to blame than he who has wished to do it.Let him see again with what great praises they celebrate Brutus, such that not being able to blame [Caesar] because of his power they celebrate his enemy.

Let one who has become a prince in a republic consider, after Rome became an Empire, how much more praise those emperors merited, who lived under the laws as good princes, than those who lived in the opposite [way]; and he will see how for Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus and Marcus it was not necessary that the praetorian soldiers or the multitude of the legions defend them, for their manners, the goodwill of the people, the love of the Senate defended them.He will also see that for Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, and many other bad emperors, the eastern and western armies did not suffice to save them from those enemies that their wicked manners and their evil life had generated for them.If the history of these be considered well, one would see teaching sufficient for any prince to show him the way to glory or blame, and to his security or fear.For of the twenty-six emperors from Caesar to Maximinus, sixteen were killed, ten died ordinarily.If among those who were killed one sees someone who was good, as were Galba and Pertinax, he was killed by that corruption his predecessor left in the soldiers; and if among those who died ordinarily one sees someone who was bad, as was Severus, that arose from his very great fortune and virtue, which two things have accompanied few men.He will also see by the reading of this history how one can order a good kingdom; for all the emperors who succeeded to the imperium by heredity, except Titus, were wicked; those by adoption were all good, as were that five from Nerva to Marcus.And when the imperium came to be hereditary, it went back to its ruin.

Let a prince put before him then the times from Nerva to Marcus, and contrast them with what came before and then afterwards; and let him choose those in which he would choose to be born and of which he would wish to be put at the head.For in those governed by the good he will see a prince secure in the midst of his secure citizens, the world full of peace and justice; he will see the Senate with its authority, the magistrates with their honors, the rich citizens enjoying their riches, nobility and virtue exalted; he will see every quiet and every good -- and on the other hand all rancor, all

license, corruption, and ambition extinguished.He will see the golden age where everyone can have and defend whatever opinion one wished.He will see, in fine, the triumph of the world: the prince full of reverence and glory, and the peoples full of love and security.If he will consider particularly the times of the other emperors, he will see them atrocious because of wars, discordant because of seditions, and cruel in peace and war -- so many princes slain with steel, so many civil wars, so many foreign, Italy afflicted and full of new misfortunes, her cities sacked and ruined.He will see Rome burnt, her Capitol dismantled by her own citizens, the ancient temples desolated, ceremonies corrupted, the cities full of adulteries -- he will see the sea full of exiles, the shores full of blood.He will see innumerable cruelties follow in Rome, and nobility, riches, past honors and above all virtue arraigned as a capital sin.He will see calumniators rewarded, the servants corrupted against their masters, the freedmen against the patron, and he who has no enemies oppressed by his friends.He will then know exceedingly well how many obligations Rome, Italy and the world owe to Caesar.

Without doubt if one is born of man he will be dismayed [and kept] from every imitation of wicked times, and he would burn with an immense desire to follow the good.And truly a prince seeking the glory of the world ought to desire to possess a corrupt city, not wholly to destroy it like Caesar but to reorder it like Romulus. And truly the heavens cannot give to men a greater occasion of glory, nor could men desire a greater.If in wishing to order a city well, one has the necessity of having to lay down the principate, he who would not order it because he would fall from his rank would merit some excuse.But if he is able to keep the principate and order it, he merits no excuse.In sum let those consider to whom the heavens have given such occasion as having placed before them two ways: one that will let them live securely, and after death will render them glorious; the other that will make them live in continual anguish, and after death leaves for themselves a sempiternal infamy.

11. Of the religion of the Romans.

Although Rome had as her first orderer Romulus, and she had to recognize, like a daughter, that from him [came] her birth and education; nonetheless, since the heavens judged that the orders of Romulus would not suffice for so much imperium, they inspired in the breast of the Roman Senate the election of Numa Pompilius as Romulus's successor,[49]so that the things that he might have left undone might be ordered by Numa.Numa,

[49] Livy, I 8.

finding a people most ferocious and desiring to reduce them to civil obedience by means of the arts of peace, turned to religion as a thing wholly necessary if one wished to maintain a civil order.[50]He constituted it in such a mode that there was never for so many centuries so great a fear of God[51] as there was in this republic, that facilitated whatever enterprise the Senate or those great men of Rome designed to undertake.[52]Whoeverwill discourse of the infinite actions, either of the people of Rome all together or by many of the Romans for themselves, will see that its citizens feared more breaking an oath than that of breaking the laws, since they held in higher esteem the power of God than that of men, as one manifestly sees by the examples of Scipio and Manlius Torquatus;[53]for after Hannibal had put to rout the Romans at Cannae, many of the citizens met together and despairing of their fatherland, agreed to abandon Italy and retire to Sicily.Scipio, upon hearing of this, went to find them and, naked steel in hand, constrained them to swear that they would not abandon the fatherland.Lucius Manlius, father of Titus Manlius who was afterwards called Torquatus, had been accused by Marcus Pomponius, Tribune of the plebs, and before the day of the trial came, Titus went to find Marcus, and threatening to kill him if he did not swear to withdraw the accusation against his father, he constrained him to swear, and so having sworn through fear withdrew the accusation.Therefore those citizens in whom the love of the fatherland the laws could not keep in Italy, were kept by an oath they were forced to take; and that tribune put aside the hatred that he had against the father, the injury that had been done him by the son, and his honor, in order to obey the oath taken -- this arose from nothing other than that religion that Numa had introduced into that city.

He who considers well the Roman histories sees how much religion served to command the armies, to animate the Plebs, to keep men good, and to shame the wicked.Therefore if one would have to dispute as to which prince Rome was more obligated, Romulus or Numa, I believe immediately that Numa would get the first rank; for where there is religion one can easily introduce arms; and where there are arms and not religion, it is with difficulty that one can introduce the latter.One sees that for Romulus, to order the Senate and to make other orders civil and military, the authority of God was not necessary for him, but it was very necessary for Numa, who pretended to being familiar with a Nymph who advised him about what he ought to advise the people; and it all arose because he wished to introduce

[50] *civiltà*

[2] *Dio* -- throughout the chapter. *Iddio* is used throughout I.12, *Iddii*n I.13, and *Dei* in I.14.

[52] Livy, I 18-20.

[53] Livy XXII 53; VII 4-5.

new and unaccustomed orders into that city, and he doubted whether his authority would suffice.

And truly there never has been any orderer of extraordinary laws in a people who has not had recourse to God, for otherwise they would not have been accepted; for there are many goods known by a prudent one, that do not have in themselves evident reasons that could make them persuade others. Therefore wise men who wish to remove this difficulty have recourse to God.Thus Lycurgus did, thus Solon, thus many others who have had the same end as theirs.Marveling then at his goodness and prudence, the Roman people yielded to his every deliberation. It is very true that those times were full of religion and the men with whom he had to work rude, so that it was with great ease that he could achieve his designs, being able easily to impress on them whatever new form.Without doubt, he who would wish in our present times to establish a republic, would find it much easier among mountain men, without civil order,[54] than among those who are used to living in cities where the civil order is corrupt; just as a sculptor will more easily draw forth a beautiful statue from rough marble, than from one badly blocked out by someone else.

Having considered everything then, I conclude that the religion introduced by Numa was among the first causes of the happiness of that city; for that caused good orders, good orders made for good fortune, and from good fortune arose the happy successes of enterprises.And as the observance of the divine cult is the cause of greatness of republics, so contempt of it is the cause of the ruin of these. For where the fear of God is lacking, it must needs be that either the kingdom is ruined or it is sustained by the fear of a prince who supplies the defect of religion.Because the lives of princes are short, it must needs be that that kingdom fails quickly, according as his virtue fails.Whence it arises that kingdoms depending solely on the virtue of one man are little durable, for that virtue runs out with his life, and seldom does it happen that it is refreshed by succession, as Dante prudently says:

> Seldom descends through the branches,
> Human probity, and this is wished
> By him who gives it, so that from him it is
> named.[55]

---

[54] *civilità*

[7] *Purgatorio* VII, 121-3.

It is not therefore the salvation of a republic or a kingdom to have a prince who prudently governs while he lives, but one who orders it in such a mode that even though [he] dies it maintains itself.And though rude men are more easily persuaded to a new order or opinion, it is not therefore because of this impossible also to persuade to it civilized men, and those who are presumed not to be rude.To [itself] the people of Florence does not appear to be either ignorant or rude; nonetheless it was persuaded by Fra Girolamo Savonarola that he spoke with God.I do not wish to judge if this was true or not, for of such a man one ought to speak with reverence.But I do say that infinite [numbers] believed him, without having seen anything extraordinary to make them believe -- for his life, his doctrine, the subject he took up were sufficient to make them lend him faith.No one should therefore despair of not being able to attain that which has been attained by others; for, as we have said in our preface, men are born, live and die, always with one and the same order.

12. Of how much importance it is to take account of religion, and how Italy, for lacking it by means of the Roman Church, has been ruined.

Those princes or those republics that wish to remain uncorrupted should above every other thing maintain the ceremonies of their religion uncorrupted and hold them always in veneration.For there is no greater indication one could have of the ruin of a province, than to see the divine cult contemned.This is easy to recognize, if one knows on what the religion of where a man is born is founded.For every religion has the foundation of its life in some principal order of its own.The life of the Gentile religion was founded on the responses of oracles and the sect of diviners and of augurers; all of their other ceremonies, sacrifices and rites depended on these, for they could easily believe that the God[56] who could predict for you your future good or your future evil, could also grant it to you.From which arose temples, sacrifices, and supplications of every ceremony to venerate them -- and thus the oracles of Delos, the temple of Jove Ammon and other celebrated oracles which filled the world with admiration and devotion.But when these began afterwards to speak in the mode of the powerful, and when this falseness was discovered by the peoples, men became unbelieving and apt for the perturbation of every good order.Therefore the princes of a republic or of a kingdom should maintain the foundations of the religion that they have; and when this is done, it will be easy to keep their republic religious and in consequence good and united.They should, in all things that arise in favor of [religion], even though they might judge them false, to favor and increase them; and they ought to do this more the more they are prudent, and the more they are knowers of natural things.Because this mode has been observed by wise men, there has arisen the opinion of miracles that are celebrated even in religions that are false; for to whatever they owed their beginning, the prudent have augmented them, and their authority gained them credence[57] with everyone.Of these miracles there were in Rome a great many, among which was [when] the Roman soldiers were sacking the city of the Veientes, some of them entered the temple of Juno, and approached her image asking her, "Do you wish to come to Rome?" and it appeared to someone that he saw her nod, and to some other that she said yes.[58] Since these men were filled with religion (which Titus Livy shows, for in entering the temple they entered without tumult, all filled with devotion and reverence), perchance the answer that they had presupposed to the question

[56] *Iddio.*
[57] *fede* -- lit., faith.
[58] Livy, V 22.

appeared to be what they heard; this opinion and credulity Camillus and the other princes of the city wholly favored and increased.Which religion if it had by the princes of the Christian republic been maintained according to what the giver of that[59] had ordered, Christian states and republics would have been more united, much more happy than they are.Nor can a better conjecture be made of its decline, than to see how those peoples who live closest to the Church of Rome, the head of our religion, have least religion.Whoever might consider its foundations would see how much present usage differs from them, and he would judge it to be without doubt either near ruin or a scourging.

And because many are of the opinion that the well-being of the cities of Italy arises from the Church of Rome, I wish against this to discuss those reasons which occur to me, and I would allege two that are most powerful and which, according to me, do not have any refutation.The first is that by the bad examples of that court this province has lost all devotion and all religion, which drags behind it infinite inconveniences and infinite disorders; for if one presupposes every good where there is religion, then where it is lacking one presupposes the contrary.We owe therefore this primary debt to the Church and our Italian priests, that we have come to be without religion and wicked.But we have yet a greater one, which is the second cause of our ruin, and this is that the Church has kept and keeps this province divided.And truly no province has ever been united or happy which has not wholly come under obedience to one republic or one prince, as happened to France and to Spain.The cause of Italy's not being in the same terms, having as yet neither one republic nor one prince governing it, is solely the Church; for having come to live in that [province], and having temporal imperium, she has neither been so powerful nor of such virtue that she could have seized the tyranny of Italy, and made herself prince; and she has not, on the other hand, been so weak that, out of fear of losing that dominion of hers of temporal things, she has not been able to call in a power that would defend her against whoever in Italy became too powerful.Many experiences of this have anciently been seen: as when by means of Charlemagne she drove out the Lombards, who were already almost king of all Italy; and when in our times she took away the power of the Venetians with the aid of France; afterwards, she drove out the French with the aid of the Swiss.The Church, then, has not been so powerful that she could seize Italy, nor has she permitted another to seize it, and this has been the reason that [Italy] has not been able to come under one head but has been under many princes and

[59] *quella* -- Is the reference to the Christian republic or the Chirstian religion? Are these the same, or should they be distinguished?

lords, which has given rise to so much disunion and so much weakness that she has been conducted to be the prey, not only of powerful barbarians but of whoever attacks her.For this we other Italians are obliged to the Church and not to others.And he who wishes by certain experience to see the truth most immediately, would need to have such power that he could send the Roman court, with the authority it has in Italy, to live in the towns[60] of the Swiss, who today are the only peoples who live, in religion as in military orders, according to the ancients; and he would see in a short time that the wicked customs of that court would make for more disorder in that province than any other accident that could arise there at any time.

13. How the Romans made use of religion to reorder the city, to carry out their enterprises, and to stop tumults.

It does not seem to me out of place to adduce some example where the Romans used religion to reorder the city and to carry out their enterprises; and although there are many such in Titus Livy, nonetheless I wish to be content with these.The Roman People having created the Tribunes with consular power and, except for one, [were] all plebeian, and there having occurred plagues and famine that year, and certain prodigies having taken place, the Nobles used this occasion of the new creation of the Tribunes, saying that the Gods[61] were angered because Rome had badly used the majesty of her imperium, and that there was no other remedy to placate the Gods than to restore the election of the Tribunes to its place; from which it arose that the plebs, dismayed by this religion, created only nobles as Tribunes.[62] One also sees in the conquest of the city of the Veientes, how the captains of the armies employed religion to keep them disposed to an enterprise: Lake Albanus having increased wondrously that year, and the Roman soldiers being wearied of the long siege and wishing to return to Rome, the Romans discovered that Apollo and certain other responses had declared that they would take the city of the Veientes the year that Lake Albanus would rise; this made the soldiers able to bear the vexations of the siege, taking from this the hope of conquering the town,[63] and were content to carry on the enterprise; such that Camillus, who was made Dictator, conquered the city after ten years of siege.[64]And thus religion was used well to help in the conquest of that city and for the restitution of the Tribunate to

[60] *terre* -- also, lands.
[61] *Iddii* -- In I 11 Machiavelli used the word *Dio*.
[62] Livy, V 14.
[63] *terra* -- the land within the walls, hence the town.
[64] Livy, V 15-16.

the Nobility; and without that said means it would have been difficult to conduct the one and the other.

I do not want to fail to adduce another example for this point.There had been many tumults in Rome caused by Terentillus, a tribune, since he wished to propose certain laws, the cause of which will be said below in its place; and among the first remedies used by the Nobility was religion, which they made use of in two modes. As for the first, they looked at the Sibylline books, and the response was that the city by means of civil sedition stood in danger that year of losing liberty; and although this thing was then exposed by the Tribunes, it nonetheless put such terror in the breasts of the plebs that it was cold in following them.[65]The other mode was when one Appius Herdonius, with a multitude of exiles and slaves to the number of four thousand men, had seized the Capitol by night, such that it could be feared that if the Aequi and the Volscians, perpetual enemies to the Roman name, would come to Rome they could conquer her; and since the Tribunes did not cease because of this to continue pertinaciously proposing the Terentillian laws, saying that the armed attack was feigned and not a true one, there went out of the Senate a Publius Ruberius, a grave citizen and of authority and, with words partly loving and partly threatening, showed the dangers of the city and the untimeliness of their demand, such that he constrained the plebs to swear not to abandon the will of the consul.Such that, the plebs, obedient, recovered the Capitol by force;but since the consul Publius Valerius was killed in the taking [of the Capitol], Titus Quintius at once was made consul again.He, in order not to answer the plebs or to give them space to think about the Terentillian laws, commanded them to leave Rome to go against the Volsci, saying that because of the oath they had taken not to abandon the consul they were obliged to follow him.[66]The Tribunes opposed this, saying that the oath was given to the dead consul and not to him.Nonetheless, Titus Livy shows how the Plebs because of fear of religion wished rather to obey the consul than to believe the Tribunes, and he speaks these words in praise of the ancient religion:"But there had not yet come to pass that negligence of the veneration of God that the age now has; nor that each should make for himself laws suited to interpreting his oath."[67]Because of this, the Tribunes doubting that they might now lose all their dignities, agreed with the consul that they would obey him, and that for one year they would not discuss the Terentillian laws, and the Consuls for one year would

[65] Livy, III 9-10.

[66] Livy, III 17-18. Livy makes no mention of Publius Ruberius.

[67] *Nondum haec, quae nunc tenet saeculum, negligentia Deum venerat, nec interpretando sibi quisque iusiurandum et leges apta facebat.* Livy, III 20.

not be able to take the plebs out to war.And thus religion enabled the Senate to overcome these difficulties which without it could never have been overcome.

14.The Romans interpreted the auspices according to necessity, and with prudence made a show of observing religion when forced not to observe it; and if anyone rashly disparaged it, they punished him.

Not only were auguries, as has been discussed above,in large part the foundation of the ancient religion of the Gentiles, but they also were the cause of the well-being of the Roman Republic.Hence the Romans had greater care of them than of any other order of theirs; using them in the consular assemblies, in the beginnings of enterprises, in leading out the armies, in engaging in battles, and in every important action of theirs, either civil or military; never would they go on an expedition that they had not persuaded the soldiers that the Gods[1] promised them victory.Among other auspices they had in the armies were certain orders of haruspices, who were called poultry-men.[2]Whenever they gave the order to engage the enemy in battle, they turned to the poultry-men to make their auspices -- if the chickens pecked, they fought with a good augury; not pecking, they abstained from the battle.Nonetheless, when reason showed them that a thing ought to be done, notwithstanding that the auspices were adverse, they did it in every mode; but turning it about with words and modes so suited that it did not seem that they had done it with a disparagement of religion.

These terms were used by Papirius, the consul, in a most important fight that he had against the Samnites, after which they remained wholly weakened and distressed.For when Papirius was in camp opposite to the Samnites, and it seemed to him that victory was certain in the fight, and wishing because of this to go into battle, he commanded the poultry-men to make their auspices.But the chickens not pecking, and the prince of the poultry-men seeing the great disposition of the army for combat, and the opinion of the captain and all the soldiers that they would conquer, in order not to take away from that army the occasion of good action, he reported to the consul that the auspices had gone well.So Papirius was drawing up the square, when some of the poultry-men said to certain soldiers that the chickens had not pecked, and these told Spurius Papirius, nephew of the consul; and when he reported it to the consul, he was immediately answered

[1] *Dei*
[2] *pullarii*. See Livy, X 40-41.

that he should attend to doing well his own office, that as for him and the army the auspices were good, and if the poultry-man had said lies, these would turn to his prejudice.So that the effect might correspond with the prognostication, he commanded the legates that the poultry-men should be drawn up in the forefront of the battle. Whence it came about that in going against the enemy, a Roman soldier cast a dart and by chance killed the prince of the poultry-men;upon hearing of which the consul said that everything had proceeded well and with the favor of the Gods, for the death of that liar had purged the army of every fault and of whatever wrath they might have had against him.Thus through knowing well how to accommodate his plans with the auspices, he decided to enter into battle without the army's becoming aware that he had in any way neglected the orders of that religion.

The contrary was done by Appius Pulchrius in Sicily, during the First Punic War, for wishing to fight the Carthaginian army, he had the auspices made by the poultry-men, and upon their reporting to him that the chickens did not peck, he said, "Let us see if they want to drink!" and threw them into the sea.Whence, upon fighting, he lost the battle.And when he was condemned in Rome and Papirius honored, it was not so much because one had lost and the other had won, but that one had acted prudently regarding auspices, and the other rashly.Nor did this mode of divining tend to any other end than to make the soldiers confidently go into battle, from which confidence victory almost always arises.This thing was not only used by the Romans but also foreigners; of which it appears to me I should adduce an example in the following chapter.

15.The Samnites, as an extreme remedy for the things afflicting them, had recourse to religion.

The Samnites, having been defeated many times by the Romans, and having been destroyed in Tuscany by the last one -- their armies and captains killed; their allies, such as the Tuscans, French and Umbrians, conquered -- "they could stand neither on their own or on external strength, yet they did not abstain from war; so far were they from being weary of the defense of liberty even without success, and they preferred to be conquered than not to attempt victory."[681] Whence they deliberated to make the ultimate test; and because they knew that if they wished to win it was necessary to induce

[68] *nec suis nec externis viribus iam stare poterant, tamen bello non abstinebant; adeo ne infeliciter quidem defensae libertatis taedebat, et vinci quam non tentare victoriam malebant.* Livy, X 31.

obstinacy in the minds[69] of the soldiers and that there was no better means to induce that than religion, they thought of repeating an ancient sacrifice using Ovius Paccius their priest, which they ordered in this form: when they made a solemn sacrifice and, between the dead victims and the altars, all the heads of the army had sworn that they would never abandon the fight, they brought in the soldiers one by one; and among these altars, in the midst of many centurions with naked sword in hand, they first swore that they would not repeat anything they saw or heard, and afterwards with words of curses and verses full of terror, they made them promise the Gods[70] that they would be ready to go wherever the commanders[71] sent them, never to flee from the fight, and to kill anyone they saw fleeing.If they did not observe this, it would come back on the head of their family and their clan.Some of them, having been frightened, did not wish to swear; and the centurions killed them at once; such that the others who came after, frightened by the ferocity of that spectacle, all took the oath.To make their assembly more magnificent, there were forty thousand men, they dressed half of them in white cloths with crests and feathers above the helmets, and thus ordered they were drawn up above the Aquilonia. Papirius came up against them, and he encouraged his soldiers, saying, "Crests do not cause wounds, and painted and gilded shields are pierced by the Roman pilum."[72]In order to weaken the opinion the soldiers had of the enemy because of the oath taken, he said that it would make them afraid and not strengthen them, for at one and the same time they would be afraid of their citizens, of the Gods, and of enemies.It came about that in the conflict the Samnites were overcome, for Roman virtue and the fear conceived by past defeats overcame whatever obstinacy they might have been able to draw from the virtue of religion and the oath taken.Nonetheless one sees how to them it appeared that they could have no other refuge, nor attempt any other remedy than to be able to gain hope of recovering lost virtue.This testifies fully to how much confidence one could have by means of religion well-used.Therefore this part, perchance, might have been better placed among the foreign things, nonetheless since it depends upon one of the most important orders of the Republic of Rome, it seemed to me it should be brought together here, in order not to divide this matter and to have to return to it several times.

16.A people used to living under a prince maintains liberty with difficulty,

[69] *animi*
[70] *Dei*
[71] *imperatori*
[72] *Non enim cristas vulnera facere, et picta atque aurata scuta transire romanum pilum.* Livy, X 39.

if by some accident it becomes free .

How difficult it is for a people used to living under a prince to preserve their liberty afterwards, if by some accident it is acquired as Rome acquired it after driving out the Tarquins, is demonstrated by infinite examples that are read in the records[731] of ancient histories.Such difficulty is reasonable, for that people is nothing other than a savage animal which, although by nature ferocious and wild, has been always nourished in prison and in servitude, is afterwards let loose freely in the countryside; not being used to pasture nor knowing the places where it might have refuge, it becomes the prey of the first who seeks to rechain it.

The same occurs to a people which, since it is used to living under the government of others, not knowing how to reason about public defenses or offenses, not knowing princes and not being known by them, returns quickly under a yoke that oft-times is heavier than the one it had a little while before lifted from its neck; and it finds itself in these difficulties, although the matter has not been corrupted. For a people into whom corruption has wholly entered cannot even for the shortest time, indeed not at all, live free, as will be discussed below: and therefore our reasonings are of those peoples where the corruption has not spread much, and where there is more of the good than of the spoiled.

Added to the above-written is one other difficulty, which is that the state which becomes free makes partisan enemies and not partisan friends.All those who in the former tyrannical state had prevailed, feeding off the riches of the prince, become partisan enemies, since the faculty of availing themselves [of these riches] is now taken away; they cannot live contentedly, and each one is forced to attempt to replace the tyranny in order to return to their authority.It does not acquire, as I have said, partisan friends, for the free life confers honors and prizes by means of some honorable and determinate causes and, apart from these, does not award any prize or honor; and when one has some honors or some advantages that he seems to merit, he does not confess to have any obligation to those who award it.Besides this, that common utility that the free life brings is not recognized by anyone while it is possessed:which is that of being able to enjoy freely his own things without any suspicion; not to have doubts regarding the honor of women or that of children; and not to fear for himself, for no one will ever confess to have an obligation to one who does not harm him.

Therefore, as I have said above, it comes to pass that a free state that newly arises has partisan enemies and not partisan friends.Wishing to remedy

---

[73] *memorie*

these inconveniences and these disorders that the above-written difficulties bring with them, there is no more powerful remedy, nor a sounder, nor a more secure, nor a more necessary, than to kill the sons of Brutus who, as the history[74] shows, were induced, together with other young Romans, to plot against their fatherland by nothing other than that they could not be extraordinarily of worth under the consuls as they could under the kings -- in such a mode that the liberty of that people seemed to become their servitude.He who undertakes to govern a multitude, either by way of liberty or of a principate, if he does not assure himself of those who are enemies to those orders, makes a state with a short life.It is true that I judge as unhappy those princes who to secure their state have to take extraordinary ways, having the multitude as enemies.For he who has the few as enemies, easily and without many scandals, can secure himself; but he who has the universal as an enemy will never secure himself; and the more he uses cruelty, the weaker his principality becomes. Such that the greatest remedy there might be is to seek to make the people friendly.

Although this discourse is not in conformity with the title, speaking here of a prince and there of a republic, nonetheless, in order not to have to return to this matter, I wish to speak of it briefly.If a prince, then, wishes to gain a people that may be hostile to him, speaking of those princes who have become tyrants of their fatherland, I say that he ought to examine first that which the people desires, and he will always find that it desires two things: one, to avenge itself against those who were the cause of its enslavement; the other, to recover its liberty.The first desire the prince will be able wholly to satisfy, the second in part.As to the first, here is an example to the point.When Clearchus, tyrant of Heraclea, was in exile it happened that a controversy arose between the people and the optimates of Heraclea.The optimates seeing themselves to be inferior, turned to favor Clearchus and conspired with him, putting him into Heraclea against the popular disposition and took away the liberty of the people.In such a mode, Clearchus found himself between the insolence of the optimates, whom he could not in any mode either make content or correct, and the rage of the popular [faction], who could not bear having lost its liberty.He decided at one stroke to liberate himself from the vexations of the great and to gain to himself the people.He took advantage of this convenient occasion: he cut into pieces all the optimates to the extreme satisfaction of the popular [party].Thus in this way he satisfied one of the wishes that peoples have, which is to avenge themselves.But as for the other popular desire of recovering its liberty, since

[74] Livy, II 1-5.

the prince is not able to satisfy it, he ought to examine the causes that these have of desiring to be free -- and he will find that one small part of them desires to be free in order to command; but that all the others, who are infinite, desire liberty to live securely.For in all republics, ordered in whatever mode, the ranks of command do not add up to more than forty or fifty citizens; and because this is a small number, it is an easy thing to assure oneself of them; either by taking them away or by giving them their share with so many honors according to their stations that they should for the most part be contented.As for the others, for whom living securely suffices, it is easy to satisfy them by making orders and laws in which, together with his power, is comprehended the security of the universality.When a prince does this, and the people see that no accident makes him break these laws, they will begin in a short time to live secure and contented. For example, there is the kingdom of France, which lives securely [because] of nothing other than that those kings are obligated by infinite laws, in which is comprehended the security of all their peoples.He who ordered that state wished that those kings should deal with arms and money in their mode; but as for everything else, they could not dispose otherwise than as the laws would order.That prince then or that republic that does not secure itself at the beginning of its state, must needs take the first occasion of so doing, as did the Romans.He who lets that pass, will repent too late of not having done that which ought to have been done.

Since the people of Rome were not yet corrupted, when it recovered liberty it was able to maintain it, when the sons of Brutus were dead and the Tarquins extinguished, with all those modes and orders that have been discussed at another time.But if the people had been corrupted, neither in Rome nor elsewhere would remedies sound enough to maintain it have been found, as will be shown in the following chapter.

17.A corrupt people, having come into liberty, can with the greatest difficulty maintain itself free.

I judge that it was necessary that either the kings be extinguished in Rome, or that Rome in a very short time would become weak and of no worth; for considering how much corruption to which the kings came, if two or three had followed in succession, and that corruption that was in them had begun to be extended to the members, as the members became corrupted it would have been impossible evermore to reform it.But since they lost the head while the trunk was whole, they could easily reduce themselves to a free and ordered life.It ought to be presupposed as a thing very true that a corrupt city living under a prince, even when that prince

with all his stock is extinguished, can never be reduced to liberty; on the contrary, it must be that one prince extinguish the other; and without the creation of a new lord it never rests, unless indeed the goodness of one, together with his virtue, keeps it free; but that liberty will last only as long as his life lasts, as it happened in Syracuse with Dion and Timoleon, whose virtue, at different times, kept that city free while they lived; once they were dead it was returned to its ancient tyranny.But there is no greater example to be seen than that of Rome, which, once the Tarquins were driven out, could immediately take and keep that liberty; but Caesar dead, Gaius Caligula dead, Nero dead, all the Caesarean race extinguished, not only could it never keep but it could not even give a beginning to liberty.Nor did such diverse results in one and the same city arise from anything other than that the Roman people were not yet corrupted in the times of the Tarquins, and in these later times extremely corrupted.For at that time, to maintain it firm and disposed to avoid kings, it sufficed only to make it swear that it would never consent that anyone should reign in Rome; and in those other times the authority and severity of Brutus[75] did not suffice, with all the Eastern legions, to make them disposed to wish to maintain that liberty that he, in imitation of the first Brutus,[76] had given them.That arose from the corruption that the Marian parties[77] had introduced into the people; for Caesar, being head of them, was able to blind the multitude such that it did not know the yoke that it itself had put on their neck.

Although this example of Rome should be placed before any other example, nonetheless I wish to add further to this subject peoples known to our times.Therefore, I say that no accident, although serious and violent, could ever restore Milan or Naples free, since their members are wholly corrupt.That was to be seen after the death of Filippo Visconti, and although Milan wished to restore liberty, it could not and did not know how to maintain it. Therefore it was Rome's great felicity that these kings became corrupt quickly, such that they were driven out before their corruption passed into the vitals of that city; which incorruption was the cause that the infinite tumults that arose in Rome, men having a good end, did not harm but rather benefited the Republic.

And one can come to this conclusion, that where the matter is not corrupted, tumults and other scandals do not harm; where it is corrupted, good laws well-ordered do not help, if they are not moved by one who with an extreme force makes them be observed such that the matter becomes

[75] Marcus Junius Brutus, Julius Caesar's assassin (ca. 85 - 42 B. C.).
[76] Lucius Junius Brutus, Roman consul in 509 B. C., founder of the Roman Republic.
[77] The reference is to the political faction led by Gaius Marius, the Roman general and consul (157 - 86 B. C.) who led the popular party against Sulla.

good.[78]I do not know whether or not this has ever come to pass, or whether it is possible that it should come to pass.For one sees, as was just said above, that a city goes into decline by corruption of matter, so that if it ever happens that it revives, it occurs through the virtue of one man who is then living, not by the virtue of the universal that is sustained by good orders, and as soon as he is dead, they return to their first habits, as happened in Thebes which, by the virtue of Epaminondas, while he lived, was able to keep the form of republic and empire.But when he was dead, the city returned to its first disorders.The cause is, a man cannot be of such long life that time would be enough to accustom to good a city long accustomed to bad.And unless one of a very long life or two virtuous successors continue disposing of it, when it lacks them, as was said above, it is ruined; unless beforehand, with many dangers and much blood, he has renewed it.For this corruption and little aptitude for the free life gives rise to an inequality in that city, and wishing it reduced to the equal it is necessary to use very great extraordinary [means], that few know how or wish to use, as in another place it will be said more particularly.[79]

18.In what mode one might be able to maintain a free state in corrupt cities, one existing there; or, if not existing, to order one there.

I believe it would not be out of place nor in disformity with the discourse written above to consider whether in a corrupt city one is able to maintain the free state, if it exists there; or if it does not exist, whether one is able to order it there.On this thing, I say that it is very difficult to do one or the other, and although it is almost impossible to give a rule, because it would be necessary to proceed according to the degrees of corruption, nonetheless since it is good to reason about everything, I do not wish to omit this.I shall presuppose an extremely corrupt city, whereby I shall truly increase such a difficulty the more; for one does not find in either laws or orders that which would suffice to restrain a universal corruption.For just as good customs have need of laws to maintain themselves, so laws to be observed have need of good customs.Besides this, the orders and laws made in a republic at its birth, when men were good, are no longer to the purpose afterwards, when they have become wicked. If the laws in a city changed according to accidents, their orders never, or rarely, change.That makes it such that the new laws rarely suffice, for the orders, that stand solid, corrupt

[78] Cf. D I 9.
[79] *D* I 55.

them.To give a better understanding of this part, I say that in Rome there was the order of government, or better of the state, and then laws by which the magistrates restrained the citizens.The order of the state was the authority of the people, of the Senate, of the tribunes, of the consuls; the mode of asking for and creating the magistracies; and the mode of making the laws.These orders were changed little or not at all by accidents.The laws that restrained the citizens changed, as did the laws regarding adulteries, the sumptuary [laws], those of ambition and many others, according to the degree the citizens became corrupt.But the orders of the state being kept firm, which, since they were corrupted were no longer good, the laws that were renewed did not suffice to keep men good; but they might well have helped, if with the innovation of the laws there had been a change of orders.

And that it is true that such orders in a corrupted city would not be good, one sees expressed under two principal heads with respect to creating the magistrates and the laws.The people of Rome gave the consulate and the other first ranks of the city only to those who asked for them.This order was in the beginning good, for only those citizens who judged themselves worthy would ask, and to be rejected was ignominious; such that to be judged worthy each one worked well.This mode then became extremely pernicious in a corrupted city, for it was not those who had more virtue but those who had more power who asked for the magistracies; and the powerless, however virtuous, abstained from asking for them out of fear.They came to this inconvenience not at one stroke, but by degrees, as happens with all other inconveniences.For the Romans having subdued Africa and Asia, and reduced almost all of Greece to their obedience, had become secure as to their liberty, nor did it seem to them that there were any more enemies who might make them fear.This security and this weakness of the enemies made it such that the people of Rome in giving the consulate did not concern themselves any longer with virtue but with favor; drawing to that rank those who knew better how to please men, not those who knew better how to conquer enemies.They then turned from those who had most favor to those who had most power, such that the good, by the defect of this order, were left wholly excluded.A tribune or any citizen whatsoever could propose a law to the people on which every citizen could speak either in favor or against it before it was deliberated upon.This order was good, when the citizens were good; for it was always good that everyone who intended a good for the public should be able to propose it, and it was good that everyone could state his opinion on it, such that the people having heard each one, could then choose the better.But with the citizens becoming wicked, such an order became very bad.For only the powerful proposed laws, not for the common

liberty but for their own power, and no one could speak against [the laws] for fear of [the powerful] such that the people came either to be deceived or forced into deliberating its ruin.

It was necessary then, in wishing that Rome in corruption would maintain its liberty, that just as it had in the course of its life made new laws, so it had to make new orders; for other orders and modes of life ought to be ordered in a bad subject than in a good, and one is not able to have the same form in a matter that is wholly contrary. But because these orders are either wholly renovated at one stroke when one discovers that they are no longer good, or little by little as each first becomes known to everyone, I say that the one and the other of these two things is almost impossible.For to wish to renovate it little by little, it is necessary that it be caused by a prudent one who would see each inconvenience while at quite a distance and as each is born.It is extremely unlikely that in such a city such a one arises; and if indeed he does arise, he will not be able to persuade others of that which he himself understands, for men who are used to living in one mode do not wish to change it; and even more is this so when they do not see the evil face to face [but] have it only before them by conjecture.As for innovating these orders at one stroke, when everyone knows that they are not good, I say that [their] uselessness is easy to recognize but difficult to correct, because to do this it does not suffice to use ordinary means[80] since ordinary modes are bad, but it is necessary to come to the extraordinary, such as violence and arms, and to become before anything else prince of that city and able to dispose it to one's mode.And because to reorder a city to a political life presupposes a good man, and to become a prince of a republic by violence presupposes a bad man, one will therefore find that very rarely will it befall that a good man, although his end be good, would wish by wicked ways to become prince; nor that a wicked one, having become prince, would wish to operate well and that it falls into his mind[81] to use the authority well that he has wickedly acquired.

From all of the above-written things arises the difficulty or impossibility in a corrupt city to maintain a republic or create it anew.Therefore when it has to be created or maintained, it is necessary to reduce it more to a kingly state than to a popular state so that those men whose insolence cannot be corrected by the laws would be reined in by a power that was quasi-regal.To wish to make them good by other ways, would be either a most cruel enterprise or wholly impossible, as I said above

[80] *termini* -- lit., terms.
[81] *animo*

of that which Cleomenes did;who, in order to be alone, killed the ephors, and for the same causes Romulus killed his brother and Titus Tatius, the Sabine, and afterwards they [both] made good use of their authority, nonetheless one ought to be cautioned that neither the one nor the other had the subject stained with that corruption that we have reasoned about in this chapter, so that they could wish, and, in so wishing, to color their design.

19.After an excellent prince a weak prince can maintain himself; but after a weak one, one cannot maintain any kingdom with another weak one.

Having considered the virtue and the mode of procedure of Romulus, Numa and Tullus, the first three Roman kings, one sees how Rome had very great fortune,having her first king most fierce and warlike, the other quiet and religious, and the third like Romulus in fierceness and more a lover of war than of peace.For it was necessary for Rome that there should arise in her first beginnings an orderer of the civil life, but it was even more necessary that other kings recover the virtue of Romulus, otherwise that city would have become effeminate, and the prey of its neighbors.Whence one might note that a successor who has not the virtue of the first, is able to maintain a state by the virtue of the one who set it up before, and he can enjoy the labors [of his predecessor]; but if it comes about either by a long life or that after him there does not arise another who recovers the virtue of the first, the kingdom is of necessity ruined.And, on the contrary, if two, one after the other, are of great virtue, one often sees very great things done, and they go with their fame up to heaven.

David was without doubt a most excellent man in arms, doctrine and judgment, and such was his virtue that having conquered and beaten all his neighbors, he left to Solomon his son a peaceful kingdom, that he could conserve with the arts of peace and not of war, and he was able to enjoy happily the virtue of his father.But he could not leave it in that way to Rehoboam his son who, since he was not like in virtue to his grandfather, nor like in fortune to his father, remained with difficulty heir to a sixth part of the kingdom.Bajazet, sultan of the Turks, who was more a lover of peace than of war, was able to enjoy the labors of Mahomet his father, who, like David, had beaten his neighbors and left him a firm kingdom that could easily be conserved with the art of peace.But if his son Selim, the present lord, had been like his father and not his grandfather, that kingdom would be ruined; but one sees that man to be surpassing his grandfather's glory.I say therefore from these examples that after an excellent prince a weak prince can maintain himself; but after a weak one, one cannot with another weak

one maintain any kingdom, unless it is like that of France, whose ancient orders maintain it: and those princes are weak who do not stand on their own in war.

I therefore conclude with this discourse, that the virtue of Romulus was such that it could give space to Numa Pompilius to be able for many years to rule Rome with the art of peace; but after him Tullus succeeded, who with his ferocity recovered the reputation of Romulus,[82] after whom came Ancus, who was so endowed by nature that he could use peace and carry on war.[83]At first he was inclined to wish to keep the way of peace, but soon came to know how the neighbors judged him effeminate and esteemed him little, such that he thought that if he wished to maintain Rome he must needs turn to war, and to be like Romulus and not Numa.

All the princes who have state should take from this example that whoever is like Numa will hold or not hold it according as the times or fortune turn under him; but he who is like Romulus, and is armed as he was with prudence and arms, he will hold it in every mode, unless an obstinate and excessive force takes it from him.Certainly one may suppose that if Rome had happened to have for her third king a man who would not have known how to give her reputation with arms, she would never have, or with the greatest difficulty, gain a footing, nor could she have effected that which she did.And thus, while one saw her under the kings, she carried these dangers of being ruined under a king who was either weak or evil.

20.Two virtuous princes in continuous succession bring forth great effects; and how well-ordered republics have of necessity virtuous successions and therefore their acquisitions and augmentations are very great.

When Rome had driven out the kings,[84] she no longer had those dangers which as was said above she bore, the succession of a weak or a bad king.For the height of imperium was reduced to the consuls, who came to that imperium not by inheritance, or deceit, or violent ambition, but through free suffrages; and they were always most excellent men, and Rome, enjoying the virtue and fortune of these, was able as time went on to come to her ultimate greatness in as many years as she had been under the kings.For one sees how two continuous successions of virtuous princes are sufficient to acquire the world, as did Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great.So

[82] Livy, I 22-31.
[83] Livy, I 32-35.
[84] Livy, I 22-31.

much more should a republic be able to do this, having by its mode of elections not only two successions but infinite most virtuous princes each succeeding the other; and this virtuous succession may always be done in every well-ordered republic.

21.How much blame that prince and that republic merits that lacks its own arms.

Present-day princes and modern republics, who with respect to offenses and defenses lack their own arms, ought to be ashamed of themselves and should think, taking the example of Tullus, that such a defect exists not by lacking men apt for the militia but through their own fault, that they have not known how to make their men military.For Tullus, Rome having been at peace for forty years, did not find upon his succeeding to the kingdom men who had ever been at war.[85]Nonetheless, on planning to make war, he did not think of making use either of the Samnites or the Tuscans or of any others who were accustomed to bearing arms; but he deliberated, like a most prudent man, that he would use his own.So much was his virtue that at one stroke under his government he was able to make most excellent soldiers.[86]And it is truer than any other truth, that where there are men and not soldiers, it arises from the defect of the prince, and not from any other defect either of site or of nature.

Of this there is a most fresh example.For every one knows how in very recent times the king of England[87] attacked the kingdom of France, and did not take any other soldiers except his own people; and since that kingdom had been more than thirty years without making war, he had neither soldiers nor a captain who had ever [seen] military [service]; nonetheless with them he did not doubt of attacking a kingdom full of captains and good armies that had been continuously under arms in the wars of Italy.All of this arose from the king being a prudent man and the kingdom well-ordered, which had not in times of peace intermitted the orders of war.

Pelopidas and Epaminondas, the Thebans, after they had liberated Thebes and brought it out of servitude to the Spartan imperium, finding themselves in a city used to servility and in the midst of effeminate peoples, did not doubt, such was their virtue, of reducing them to arms and going with them to find the Spartan armies in the field, and to conquer them.He who writes[88] of this says how these two in a brief time showed how men of

[85] Livy, I 22-31.
[86] Livy, I 31.
[87] Henry VIII.
[88] Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, 17.

war were born not only in Lacedaemon but in every other place where men are born, if only they find those who know how to direct the militia, as one sees that Tullus knew how to direct the Romans.And Virgil could not have expressed better this opinion, nor could other words show how closely he adheres to that opinion, than where he says:

...Tullus will change the slothful
Into men of arms.[89]

22.What is to be noted in the case of the three Roman Horatii and the three Alban Curiatii.

Tullus, king of Rome, and Mettius, king of Alba, agreed that whichever of the above-written three men should win that people would be the lord of the other.[90]The Alban Curiatii were all killed; one of the Roman Horatii was left alive.And because of this Mettius the Alban king and his people were left subject to the Romans.And when that victorious Horatius was returning to Rome he met one of his sisters who was married to one of the three dead Curiatii.She wept for the death of her husband, and he killed her.Whereupon that Horatius was brought to judgment for this fault, and after many disputes was freed more through the prayers of his father than through his own merits.From which one is to note three things.First, that one should never risk his whole fortune with part of his forces; the other, that in a well-ordered city never should faults be recompensed by merits; the third, that treaties are never wise where one should or can doubt their observance.For being a slave is of such importance to a city that never should one believe that any of those kings or peoples would be content that three of their citizens should have [brought] them into subjection, as one sees in what Mettius wanted to do.Although immediately after the victory of the Roman he confessed himself conquered and promised obedience to Tullus, nonetheless in the first expedition which he agreed to undertake against the Veientes, one sees how he sought to deceive [Tullus], as one who has seen too late the rashness of the part taken by him.[91]And because enough has been said of this third notable thing, we shall speak only of the other two in the following two chapters.

---

[89]*Aeneid*, VI 813-814. Machiavelli quotes the lines as:

...Desidesque movebit
Tullus in arma viros.

Virgil says *Residesque*. The meaning is not changed.

[90] Livy, I 23-26.

[91] Livy, I 27-30.

23.That one ought not put all fortune in danger and not all forces; and because of this the guarding of passes is often harmful.

It has never been judged a wise part to put into danger all of your fortune and not all forces.This may be done in several modes.One is to act as did Tullus and Mettius when they committed all the fortune of their fatherland and the virtue of so many men, that both of them had in their armies, to the virtue and fortune of three of their citizens, which came to but the least part of the forces each one had.Nor did they see how by this choice all the labor that had been endured by their ancestors in ordering the republic, to make it live in liberty for a long time and to make its citizens defenders of their liberty, were as though in vain, since it was in the power of so few to lose it.In this, those kings could not have done anything more ill-considered.

Into this inconvenience they too almost always fall who, when the enemy comes, plan to hold the difficult places and guard passes.For this deliberation will almost always be harmful, unless you can conveniently keep all your forces in that difficult place.In this case, that choice is to be taken; but if the place is harsh, and one cannot keep there all forces, the choice is harmful.What makes me so judge is the example of those who, being attacked by a powerful enemy, and having their country surrounded by Alpine-like mountains and places, have never been tempted to fight the enemy in their passes and mountains, but go to meet him before these.Or if they have not wished to do this, they have awaited him within, behind these mountains, in places benign and not Alpine-like.The cause is what has been previously alleged, for one is not able to conduct to the guarding of Alpine-like places many men -- both because they cannot live there a long time and because these are narrow places and capable of holding but few that it is not possible to withstand an enemy who comes [in] great [numbers] to strike you down; and for the enemy it is easy to come in great numbers, for his intention is to pass through and not to stop there.And for him who awaits, it is impossible to wait with great numbers, having to encamp for a long time, not knowing when the enemy wishes to pass, in places, as I have said, narrow and sterile.Losing then the pass you have presumed that you could hold, and upon which your peoples and your army relied, there usually enters into those peoples and the remainder of your host such terror that without being able to try their virtue they are lost: and you have thus come to have lost all your fortune with part of your forces.

Everyone knows with what difficulty Hannibal passed over the Alps which divided Lombardy from France[92]and with what difficulty he passed that which divided Lombardy from Tuscany;[93]nonetheless the Romans first waited on the Ticinus[94] and afterwards on the plain of Arezzo,[95] for they preferred that their army be consumed by the enemy in places where they could win than to conduct it up to the Alps to be destroyed by the malignity of the site.

He who will read all the histories perceptively will find very few virtuous captains to have been tempted to hold similar passes, and for the reasons said, and because one is not able to close all of them, since mountains are like the countryside and, there being not only the customary and frequented ways but many others, which if foreigners are not aware of them then the country people[96] certainly are.With the aid of them you will always be conducted to whatever place against the will of whoever opposes you.Of this one cannot adduce a fresher example than that in 1515.When Francis, king of France, planned to pass into Italy in order to recover the state of Lombardy, the chief reliance[97] of those who opposed to the enterprise was that the Swiss would hold the passes over their mountains.As their experience then showed, their reliance was in vain; for that king left aside the two or three places they were guarding, and he came by another unknown way and was soon in Italy and down upon them before they had any presentiment of it.So in their dismay they retired to Milan, and all the peoples of Lombardy joined the French host, having been mistaken in that opinion they had that the French would be stopped in the mountains.

24.Republics that are well-ordered constitute rewards and punishments for their citizens, and never let one compensate for the other.

The merits of Horatius were very great, having with his virtue conquered the Curiatii.His fault was atrocious, having killed his sister.Nonetheless so displeasing was that homicide to the Romans, that they conducted him to a trial for his life, notwithstanding that the merits of his were so great and so fresh.[98]Whoever would superficially consider this, it

[92] Livy, XXI 32-38.
[93] Livy, XXI 58.
[94] Livy, XXI 45-46.
[95] Livy XXII 2-5.
[96] *paesani* -- also, peasants.
[97] *maggior foundamento* -- lit., the greatest foundation.
[98] Livy, I 26,5,11.

would seem an example of popular ingratitude. Nonetheless he who examines it better and with greater consideration, seeking for that which ought to be the orders of republics, will blame that people rather for having absolved him than for having wished to condemn him.The reason is this, that there is no well-ordered republic that has ever canceled the demerits of its citizens with their merits, but having ordered rewards for a good work and penalties for a wicked one, and having rewarded one for having done well if that same [man] afterwards does badly, he is chastised without having any regard for his good works. When these orders are well-observed, a city lives free a long time, otherwise it will always soon be ruined. For if a citizen, having done some excellent deed for the city, conjoins with the reputation which that [deed] has brought him an audacity and confidence of being able to do without fear of punishment some deed that is not good, he will shortly become so insolent that it will dissolve all civil life.[99]

It is very necessary, wishing to keep the penalty for wicked deeds, to observe giving rewards for good deeds as one sees Rome did.Though a republic be poor, and able to give little, it should not abstain from that little, for every little gift, given to someone as recompense of a good however great, will always be very greatly esteemed and honored by whoever receives it. The history of Horatius Cocles[100] is very well known and that of Mucius Scaevola[101] -- of how the one withstood the enemy on a bridge until it was cut down, and the other burnt the hand that had erred in his wish to assassinate Porsenna king of the Tuscans.For these two so excellent deeds each of these was given from the public two *stadera* of land.[102]Also known is the history of Manlius Capitolinus. To this one, having saved the Capitol from the French who were encamped there, was given by those who were besieged in there together with him a small measure of flour.[103]That reward, according to the fortune then current in Rome, was great, and of such quality that Manlius was then moved either by envy or by his wicked nature to attempt to raise sedition in Rome, and seeking to gain the people he was without any respect for his merits hurled precipitously from that Capitol that he had earlier saved with so much glory to himself.

25.That he who wishes to reform an antiquated state in a free city retain at least the shadow of its ancient modes.

[99] *civiltà*
[100] Livy, II 10-11.
[101] Livy, II 12-13.
[102] *terra*
[103] Livy, V 47. A measure of wine was also given to Manlius.

He who desires or wishes to reform a state of a city, wishing that it be accepted and he be able to maintain it to the satisfaction of everyone, is necessitated to retain at least the shadow of its ancient modes, such that it does not appear to the peoples to have changed orders, although in fact the new orders are wholly alien to those of the past, for the universality of men nourish themselves as much on things that appear to be as by that which is; nay, many times they are moved more by the things that appear than by those that are.For this cause the Romans, knowing that necessity in the beginning of their free life, instead of a king created two consuls, for they wanted them not to have more than twelve lictors, in order not to exceed the number of those who ministered to the kings.[104]Besides this, since they made in Rome an annual sacrifice that could not be done unless the king were there in person, and since the Romans did not want to have that people, because of the absence of the king, desire anything from the old regime, they created a head of that said sacrifice whom they called the Sacrificing King, and placed him under the Chief Priest.Thus the people in taking this way came to be satisfied with that sacrifice, and by never having a cause, through a want of it, of desiring a return of the kings.[105]And this should be observed by all those who wish to cancel an ancient life in a city and reduce it to a new and free life.Since new things alter the minds[106] of men, you should contrive to see to it that those alterations retain as much of the old as is possible; and if the magistrates change in number, authority and tenure, they should of the old retain at least the name.This, as I have said, ought to be observed by he who wishes to order a political life, either by way of a republic or a kingdom.But he who wishes to establish an absolute power, such as the authors have called tyranny, ought to renovate everything, as the following chapter will say.

26.A new prince, in a city or province taken by him, ought to make everything new.

Whoever becomes prince either of a city or a state, especially when his foundations are weak, and it does not incline towards a civil life either by way of a kingdom or a republic, the best remedy that he would have to keep that principate, if he is a new prince, is to make everything in that state anew.That is, to make new governments in cities with new names, new authority, new men; to make the rich poor and the poor rich, as David did

[104] Livy, I 8.
[105] Livy, II 2.
[106] *le mente*

when he became king: "who filled the hungry with good things, and the rich sent empty away."[1071]Besides this, to build new cities, to destroy those that have been built, to move the inhabitants from one place to another, and in sum not to leave anything intact in that province; and that there be neither rank, nor order, nor state, nor riches, that he who has it does not acknowledge it as from you; and to take for his aim Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander, who with these modes, from a little king became prince of Greece.And he who writes of him says that he transferred men from province to province as herdsmen transfer their flocks.[108]These are extremely cruel modes and inimical to any life not only Christian but human, and any human being whatever should avoid them, and wish rather to be a private man than be a king with such ruin of men. Nonetheless, he who does not wish to take the first way of good, it must needs be, if he wishes to maintain [himself], that he enter upon this bad one.But men pick certain middle ways that are extremely harmful; they know neither how to be wholly evil nor wholly good, as the following chapter will show by example.

27.Very rarely do men know how to be altogether bad or altogether good.

Pope Julius II, on going in 1505 to Bologna to drive from that state the house of the Bentivogli, which had held the principate of that city a hundred years, wished also to remove Giovampagolo Baglioni from Perugia, of which [the latter] was the tyrant, as [the pope] had taken an oath[109] against all the tyrants who occupied the lands of the Church.Having come near Perugia, being of this mind[2] and with this deliberation, as was known to everyone, [the pope] did not wait to enter into that city with his army that would have guarded him, but he entered disarmed, notwithstanding that Giovampagolo was also in the city with a good many men that he had gathered for his own defense.So carried away was he with the furor with which he governed all things, that with a simple guard he put himself into the hands of the enemy whom he then took with him, leaving a governor in that city who would render justice[3] for the Church.Prudent men who were with the pope noted the temerity of the pope and the cowardice of Giovampagolo, and they could not account whence it came that the latter

---

[107] Luke 1:53. Quoted in Latin: "*qui esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.*"
[108] Justin, VIII 5.
[109] *congiuration control tutti it tiranni* -- which might also be translated, "had consipred against all the tyrants..."
[2] *animo*
[3] *rendesse ragione* -- lit., "render reason."

did not to his perpetual fame overpower his enemy at one stroke, and enrich himself with booty, since with the pope were all his cardinals and their luxuries.[4]Nor could it be believed that he had either abstained through goodness or that through conscience he held back; for into the breast of a vicious man, who had taken his sister for himself, had killed his cousins and nephews in order to rule, no pious respect could have descended; but it is to be concluded that it arose from men not knowing how to be honorably wicked or perfectly good; and since a malicious [deed][5] has greatness in it, or is in some way generous, they do not know how to enter into it.

Thus Giovampagolo, who did not mind being esteemed incestuous and a public parricide, did not know, or better to say he did not dare, having a just occasion, to undertake an enterprise for which everyone would have admired his spiritedness, and he would have left of himself an eternal memory as being the first to have shown prelates how little esteemed are those who live and reign as they do -- and to have done a thing whose greatness would have surpassed any infamy and any danger that would have proceeded from it.

28.For what cause the Romans were less ungrateful to their citizens than the Athenians.

Whoever reads the things done by republics will find in all of them a kind of ingratitude against their citizens, but will find that to be less so in Rome than in Athens, and perhaps than in any other republic.Seeking for the cause of this, speaking of Rome and of Athens, I believe that it befell because the Romans had less cause for suspecting their citizens than did the Athenians.For in Rome, reasoning of her from the expulsion of the kings until Sulla and Marius, never was her liberty taken away by any of her citizens, in such a mode that there never arose a great cause in [that city] for suspecting them and, consequently, inconsiderately harming them.But the contrary indeed came to pass in Athens, since her liberty was taken away by Pisistratus in her most flourishing time, and under a pretense of goodness, as soon as she again became free, remembering the injuries received and the past servitude, she became a very prompt avenger, not only of errors but of the shadow of errors of her citizens.From this arose the exile and the death of so many excellent men; from this the orders of ostracism and every other violence that that city inflicted against her optimates at various times.And that which is said by these writers on civil life is very true, that the people bite

[4]*delizie* -- lit., "delights."
[5]*malizia* -- an evil deed that involves cunning and artifice.

more fiercely after they have recovered their liberty than if they have preserved it.Whoever then will consider all that has been said will not blame Athens in this nor will he praise Rome, but he will accuse only the necessity that arose in these cities from the diversity of accidents.For he who will consider these things subtly will see that if Rome would have had her liberty taken away as Athens had, Rome would not have been gentler to her citizens than was [Athens].From this one is able to make a very true conjecture of that which occurred against Collatinus[110] and Publius Valerius[111] after the expulsion of the kings. The first of these, although one would find him to be for the liberty of Rome, was ordered into exile for no other cause than of having the name of the Tarquins; the other merely caused suspicion of himself by building a house on the Caelian Hill,[112]and because of this was almost exiled.So that one may estimate, having seen how suspicious and severe Rome was with these two, that she would have been as ungrateful as was Athens, if her citizens like those of Athens had injured her in early times and before beginning her expansion.And in order not to have to turn again to this matter of ingratitude, in the following chapter I will say of it that which must be said.

29.Who is more ungrateful, a people or a prince.

It seems to me proper to the matter written above to discourse on who shows greater examples of this ingratitude, a people or a prince.In order better to dispute this part, I say that this vice of ingratitude arises from either avarice or from suspicion.For when either a people or a prince has commanded a captain of theirs to go out on an important expedition, that captain then in succeeding having acquired much glory, that prince or that people has to come forward to reward him.If, instead of rewarding him, moved by avarice, he is either dishonored or offended, and not wishing, restrained by this cupidity, to satisfy him, it makes for an error that has no excuse, but rather brings along with it an eternal infamy.Yet one finds many princes who sin in this way. And Cornelius Tacitus tells the cause with this maxim: "One is more inclined to repay an injury than a benefit, for gratitude is held to be a burden, revenge a gain."[113]But when he is not rewarded or, to say it better, he is harmed, not moved by avarice but by suspicion, then it merits some excuse [for both] the people and the prince.Of these [acts of]

[110] Livy, II 2.
[111] Livy, II 7.
[112] The house was actually built on the Velia. Livy, II 7,11-12.
[113] *Proclivius est iniuriae, quam beneficio vicem exsolvere*, *quia gratia oneri, ultio in questu habetur*. Tacitus, *Histories*, IV 3.

ingratitude done from such a cause, one reads of many of them.For that captain who virtuously has acquired an empire for his lord, overcoming enemies and covering himself with glory and his soldiers with riches, of necessity -- with the soldiers, the enemies, and with the prince's own subjects -- acquires such reputation that the victory cannot be known as good by the lord who has sent him.And because the nature of men is ambitious and suspicious, and it does not know how to set a limit to its fortune, it is impossible that such suspicion, which arises immediately in the prince after the victory of his captain, would not be increased by the [captain] himself by something in his manner or words used insolently; such that the prince cannot think of anything other than of securing himself.To do this he thinks of either putting him to death or taking away the reputation that he has gained in his army and among his people, and with all industry to show that the victory arose not through his virtue but through fortune, or through the cowardice of the enemy, or through the prudence of the other heads who had been with him in that battle.

When Vespasian was in Judea and had been proclaimed emperor by his army,[114] Antonius Primus who found himself with another army in Illyria took his part and came to Italy against Vitellius who reigned in Rome, and he with the greatest virtue broke two Vitellian armies and seized Rome; such that Mucianus, sent by Vespasian, found that by the virtue of Antonius all had been acquired and every difficulty conquered.The reward Antonius received was that Mucianus took from him immediately the obedience of his army and little by little reduced him to being without authority in Rome.So that when Antonius went to find Vespasian, who was still in Asia, who received him in such a way that, in a short time, reduced to having no rank and almost desperate, he died.[115]And the histories are full of these examples. In our times, everyone now alive knows with what industry and virtue Gonsalvo Ferrante,[116] serving in the Kingdom of Naples against the French for Ferdinand, king of Aragon, conquered and won that kingdom, and how the reward he received for that victory was that when Ferdinand left Aragon and came to Naples, he first relieved him of the command of the men-at-arms, next took from him the fortresses, and then brought him back with him to Spain, where in a short time he then died unhonored.

So natural then is this suspicion to princes, that they cannot defend themselves against it, and it is impossible that they act with gratitude to those who by victory have made great acquisitions under their banners.From that

[114] Vespasian was in Egypt when he was proclaimed emperor. Tacitus, *Histories*, II 6,8.
[115] Tacitus, *Histories*, II 2-3,8, 15-26, 46-49, 52-53, 58-65, 78; IV 39, 80.
[116] Gonzalo Fernández de Cordoba (1453-1515).

which a prince cannot defend himself, it is not miraculous, nor a thing greatly worthy of memory, if a people is not able to defend itself.For since a city that lives free has two ends, the one that it acquires, the other that it keeps itself free, it must needs be that it will err from too much love with respect to one or the other.As to the errors in acquiring, that will be said in its place.As to the errors in keeping itself free, among others there are these: of harming those citizens it ought to reward, and of being suspicious of those whom it should trust.Although in a republic that has become corrupted these modes are the cause of great evils, and many times make it come the sooner to tyranny, as happened in Rome with Caesar, who himself took by force that which ingratitude denied him; nonetheless in a republic that is not corrupted they are causes of great goods, and make it live free longer, maintaining it by keeping men better and less ambitious through fear of punishment.It is true that among all the peoples that have ever had imperium, for the causes discussed above, Rome was the least ungrateful.For one can say of her ingratitude that there was no other example than that of Scipio, for Coriolanus and Camillus were exiled for the injury that each had done to the plebs.[117]But one was not pardoned for having always preserved a mind hostile against the people; the other was not only enriched but for the rest of his life was adored as a prince.But the ingratitude shown to Scipio arose from a suspicion that the citizens began to have of him but which they did not have of others: that arose from the greatness of the enemy Scipio had conquered, of the reputation that victory had given him in so long and dangerous a war, to its quickness, from the favors that youth, prudence, and his other memorable virtues acquired for him.These things were such that the magistrates of Rome, not to mention others, feared his authority.This displeased the wise men, as a thing not usual in Rome.And his life seemed so extraordinary that Cato Priscus,[118] reputed to be holy, was the first to oppose him, saying that a city could not be called free where there was a citizen who was feared by the magistrates; such that if the people of Rome followed in this case the opinion of Cato, it merits that excuse that I have said above that peoples and princes merit who are ungrateful because of suspicion.Concluding this discourse then, I say that practising this vice of ingratitude is either from avarice or from suspicion, and one will find that peoples never practise it because of avarice; and as for suspicion they practise it much less than princes, having less cause for suspicion, as will be said below.

[117] Livy, II 34; V 23-32.
[118] Cato the Censor (231-149 B.C.)

30.What modes a prince or a republic should use to avoid this vice of ingratitude, and what should be done by that captain or citizen in order not to be oppressed by it.

A prince, in order to avoid this necessity of having to live with suspicion or be ungrateful, ought personally to go on expeditions, as in the beginning the Roman emperors did, and as is done in our times by the Turk, and as those who are virtuous have done and do.For in winning, the glory and the acquisition is all theirs; but when they are not there, since the glory is that of others they cannot use that acquisition if they do not extinguish that glory in others that they have not known how to gain for themselves.They become ungrateful and unjust; and without doubt what they lose is greater than what they gain.But when through either negligence or little prudence they stay idle at home and send a captain, I have no other precept to give them than that which they know themselves.But I do indeed say to that captain, that since I judge that he cannot avoid the bites of ingratitude that he do one of two things: either immediately after the victory he leaves his army and puts himself into the hands of his prince keeping himself from any insolent or ambitious act, such that the [prince], stripped of any suspicion, would have cause either to reward him or not to offend him; and when it seems to him that this is not to be done, he should spiritedly do the contrary, and take all the means by which he believes that acquisition might be his own and not that of his prince, making the soldiers and subjects well-disposed to himself, and making new friends with the neighbors, occupying the fortresses with his own men, corrupting the princes of his army and securing himself against those he cannot corrupt, and with these means to seek to punish his lord with that ingratitude that would have been used against him.Other ways there are none; but as has been said above men do not know how to be either altogether wicked or altogether good.And it always comes about that, immediately after the victory, they do not wish to leave the army, they cannot bear themselves modestly, and they do not know how to use violent measures that have honor in them.Thus, equivocating among all these things, their delay and ambiguity destroy them.

As for a republic wishing to avoid this vice of ingratitude, one cannot give the same remedy as that to the prince, that is, that he go on and not send out its expeditions, since it is of necessity that one of the citizens be sent out.It is fitting, therefore, that the remedy I give it is that it take the same modes that were taken by the Roman Republic, to be less ungrateful than others; and that arises from the modes by which she was governed.For employing the whole city in war, both the noble and the ignobles, there always rose up in Rome in every age so many virtuous men and adorned

with various victories, that the people did not have cause to doubt any one of them since they were many and watched one another.They so maintained their integrity, and were respectful of not giving the shadow of any ambition or cause to the people to offend them as ambitious, that when there was a dictator, he carried off from it the greater glory the sooner he laid it down.Thus, since such modes could not generate suspicion, they did not generate ingratitude.In such a mode, a republic that does not wish to have cause for being ungrateful ought to govern itself as did Rome; and a citizen who wishes to avoid its bites ought to observe the terms observed by the Roman citizens.

31.That Roman captains were never extraordinarily punished for committing an error; nor were they ever yet punished for ignorance or bad judgments made, when injuries to the republic followed.

The Romans were not only less ungrateful than other republics, as we have discussed above, but they were also more merciful and more respectful in punishing the captains of their armies than any others.For if his error were done from malice, they punished him humanely;[119] and if it were from ignorance, they did not punish him but rewarded and honored him.This mode of procedure was well-considered by them; for they judged that it was so important to those who governed their armies, that he have a free and expeditious mind[120] and without any extrinsic concerns[121] in making choices, that they did not wish to add to a thing, which was in itself difficult and dangerous, new difficulties and dangers, thinking that to add these would mean that never would anyone be able to operate virtuously.For instance, they might order an army into Greece against Philip of Macedon, or in Italy against Hannibal, or against those peoples whom they first conquered: the captain who was put in charge of such an expedition was anguished with all the cares that go along with these, which are grave and most important.Now if to such cares were added many examples in which Romans had crucified or otherwise killed those who had lost the day, it would have been impossible for that captain amidst such suspicions that he deliberate strenuously.Judging therefore that for those to whom this happened the ignominy of having lost would be punishment enough, they did not wish to dismay them with any greater penalty.

---

[119] *umanamente* -- or, humanly.
[120] *animo*
[3] *rispetti* - lit. "respects".

Here is an example of an error not committed through ignorance. Sergius and Virginius were in the field besieging Veii, each put in charge of a part of the army.[122] Of whom, Sergius was where the Tuscans could come to meet them, and Virginius was on the other side.What occurred was that Sergius, being attacked by the Falisci and other peoples, suffered his being defeated and put to flight before he sent to Virginius for help.For his own part, Virginius, waiting that [Sergius] might humiliate himself, wished rather to see the dishonor of his fatherland and the ruin of that army than to rescue him.It was truly an evil thing and worthy of being noted, and from which one might draw a not very good conjecture of the Roman Republic, if both of them had not been chastised.It is true that where another republic would have punished them capitally, these were punished by fines.That arose, not because their sins did not merit greater punishment, but because the Romans wished in this case, for the reasons already said, to maintain their ancient customs.As for errors through ignorance, there is no more beautiful example than that of Varro, through whose temerity the Romans were defeated by Hannibal at Cannae, where that Republic bore the danger of losing its liberty; nonetheless because he was ignorant and not malicious, not only did they not chastise him but honored him, and all the senatorial order went to meet him on his return to Rome; and since they could not thank him for the fight, they thanked him for returning to Rome and of not having despaired of the affairs of Rome.[123]When Papirius Cursor wished to put Fabius to death for having fought the Samnites against his orders, among other reasons that the father of Fabius cited against the obstinacy of the dictator was that the Roman people had never done in any loss of its captains what Papirius in victories wished to do.[124]

32.A republic or a prince ought not defer benefiting men in their necessities.

Although the Romans were happily successful in being liberal to the people just as danger came upon them, as when Porsenna attacked Rome in order to restore the Tarquins (whence the Senate being doubtful that the plebs would accept the kings rather than sustain the war, in order to secure itself relieved it of the tax on salt and every other burden, saying that the poor worked enough for the public benefit in nourishing their children, and that for this benefit the people exposed itself to endure siege, hunger and

[122] Livy, V 8-11.
[123] *le cose romane* -- lit., the things of Rome. Livy, XXIV 61.
[124] Livy, VIII 30.

war),[125] let there be no one who, relying on this example, defers gaining over the people to times of dangers, for never will it succeed as it did succeed for the Romans.For the universality will judge that it has that good not from you but from your adversaries and having to fear that when the necessity is past you will take from them that which you had been forced to give them, it will in no way be obliged to you.The cause of why this part turned out well for the Romans was because the state was new and not as yet firm, and the people had already seen before how laws had been made to their benefit, as that of the appeal to the plebs, in such a mode that it was possible to persuade them that the good that was done was caused not so much by the coming of the enemy as the disposition of the Senate to benefit them.Besides this, the memory of the kings was fresh, by whom they had been in many modes despised and injured.Since similar causes rarely come about, it will also occur rarely that similar remedies be helpful.Therefore whoever holds state, a republic as well as a prince, ought to consider beforehand what unfavorable times could come upon him, and what men he might have need of in adverse times, and then to live with them in that mode that he judges that he will be necessitated to live, let whatever case arise.Whoever governs himself otherwise, either a prince or a republic but especially a prince, and then believes, when danger comes upon him, that with benefits he can regain men, deceives himself, for not only does he not make sure of them but he hastens his own ruin.

33.When an inconvenience has grown within a state or against a state, it is a more salutary policy to temporize with it than to strike it down.

The Roman Republic growing in reputation, forces and imperium, the neighbors, who at first had not thought of how much that new republic could bring them harm, began but late to recognize their error and, wishing to remedy that which at first they had not remedied, fully forty peoples conspired against Rome; whence the Romans, among other remedies made solely for their most urgent dangers, wished to create the dictator, that is to give power to one man who without any consultation could deliberate, and without any appeal could execute his deliberations; that remedy was not only useful at the time, and was the cause of why they vanquished the dangers that loomed over them, but was always most useful in all the accidents that the augmentation of the imperium at all times brought against the Republic.[126]

[125] Livy, II 9.
[126] The Romans created the first dictator in 498 B.C. See Livy, II 18.

Upon such an accident one is led to discuss first, that when an inconvenience arises within a republic or against a republic, caused by intrinsic or extrinsic causes, and has become so great that it begins to make everyone fear, how it is a much safer policy to temporize with it than to attempt to extinguish it.For almost always those who attempt to kill it make its forces greater and accelerate the evil that they suspected to have from it.Accidents like this arise in a republic more often from intrinsic causes than extrinsic, for many times either a citizen is allowed to take more forces than is reasonable, or a law that is the very nerve and life of the free life begins to be corrupted, and this error is allowed to run on until it is a more harmful policy to wish to remedy it than to let it go on.To recognize these inconveniences when they are born is made more difficult, for it seems most natural to men always to favor the beginnings of things.And the deeds that appear to have some virtue in themselves and are done by young men are more capable of [receiving] such favors than anything else.For when in a republic one sees arise a young noble who might have in himself extraordinary virtue, all the eyes of the citizens begin to turn to him and without any respect run together to honor him.In such a mode that if there is in him any touch of ambition, the favors that nature has given him and this accident mix together, he comes quickly to a place that, when the citizens see their error, they have few remedies to obviate it, and wishing to work those they have, they do nothing but accelerate his power.

Of this one could adduce many examples, but I wish only to give one from our city. Cosimo de' Medici, from whom the house of the Medici had the beginning of its greatness in our city, came to have such reputation with the favor that was given him by his prudence and the ignorance of the other citizens, that he began to make the state fearful, in such a mode that the other citizens judged it was dangerous to offend him, and most dangerous to let him thus stand.But Niccolò da Uzzano who, living in those times, was held to be a most expert man in civil things, and having made the first error of not recognizing the dangers that could arise from the reputation of Cosimo, while he lived he never permitted that the second be made, that is that one be tempted to wish to extinguish him, judging that attempt to be wholly the ruin of their state.As one saw in fact happen after his death, for those citizens who remained, not observing his counsel, came strongly against Cosimo and drove him from Florence.Whence it arose that his party, made resentful by this injury, called him back a little afterwards, and made him prince of the republic, to which rank he would never have climbed without that manifest opposition.

The same happened in Rome with Caesar who, favored by Pompey and others for his virtue, that favor was converted a little afterwards into fear: of which Cicero gives testimony, saying that Pompey had too late began to fear Caesar.That fear made them think of remedies, and the remedies used accelerated the ruin of their republic.

I say, then, that since it is so difficult for these evils to be recognizedwhen they arise, caused by this difficulty of a deception that things make for you in the beginning, it is a wiser policy to temporize with them, after they have been recognized for what they are, than to oppose them; for temporizing with them, either they will extinguish themselves or at least the evil will be deferred a little longer.Princes, who plan to cancel or with their forces and impetus oppose them, ought in all things open their eyes, and that they not give in exchange an augmentation of the harm done, or believe that they are driving a thing [forward] when they are pulling it back, or suffocating a plant by watering it; but they ought to consider well the forces of the evil, and when you see yourself to be sufficient to heal it, to put it to [the cure] without respect; otherwise to let it be and not to attempt it in any mode.For it will happen, as said in the above discourse, as it happened to the neighbors of Rome; for whom, after Rome had grown to such power, it was safer with the modes of peace to seek to placate her and keep her back, than with the modes of war to make her think of new orders and new defenses.For their conspiracy did nothing other than to make [the Romans] more united, more vigorous, and thinking of new modes by means of which they could in a very short time enlarge their power.Among these was the creation of the Dictator, by which new order not only did they overcome the dangers that loomed over them, but was the cause of obviating infinite evils that that republic would have incurred without that remedy.

34.Dictatorial authority did good and not harm to the Roman Republic; and how the authorities that citizens take for themselves, and not those given to them by free suffrages, are pernicious to civil life.

Some writer has condemned those Romans who invented the mode of creating the Dictator in that city, as a thing that was the cause in time of the tyranny in Rome, alleging that the first tyrant in that city commanded it under this title of Dictator, saying that without it Caesar would not have been able to make honest his tyranny under any public title.Whoever has this opinion has not examined the thing well, and it has been believed without any reason.For it was neither the name nor the rank of Dictator that made Rome servile, but the authority taken by citizens because of the length of imperium.If there had not been the name of Dictator in Rome they would have taken another, because forces easily acquire names, and not names forces.And one sees that the Dictator, while it was given according to public orders and not by private authority, always did good for the city, because magistrates who make up their own authority and are given it by extraordinary ways harm republics, and not those who come by ordinary ways, as one sees happened in Rome that in so much passage of time never did any Dictator do anything but good for the republic.

For this there are most evident reasons.First, because to wish that a citizen be able to do harm and take extraordinary authority, it must needs be that he have many qualities which it is impossible ever to have in an uncorrupted republic, for he has to be very rich and have many adherents and partisans that one cannot have where the laws are observed; and if even then he had them, such kinds of men are so formidable in mode that free suffrages do not concur to elect them.Besides this, the Dictator was appointed for a [limited] time and not in perpetuity, and only to dispose of that cause for which he was created, and his authority was extended to him to enable him to deliberate by himself concerning the remedies for that urgent danger and to do everything without consultation and to punish anyone without appeal;but he could not do anything that would be a diminution of the state, as taking authority from the Senate or the People would have been, [or] doing away with the old orders of that city and making new ones. In such a mode that, taking all these things together -- the short life of his dictatorship, the limited authority that he had, and the Roman people not being corrupted -- it was impossible that he escape his bounds and injure the city, and by experience one sees that he was always ever useful.

And truly among other Roman orders this is one that merits to be considered and numbered among those that were the cause of the greatness

of such an empire.For without a like order cities with difficulty escape extraordinary accidents.For the customary orders in a republic tend to move slowly, since no council and no magistrate can do anything by themselves, but for many things each one needs the other; and because to bring together these wills takes time, their remedies are most dangerous when they remedy a thing that cannot wait for time.Therefore republics ought to have among their orders a similar mode.The Venetian Republic, which among modern republics is excellent, has reserved authority to a few citizens who, when there are urgent needs, without wide consultation can decide if all are agreed.For when a republic lacks such a similar mode, it is necessary either to ruin itself by observing its orders, or to break them that it not be ruined.In a republic one would never wish that there should befall a thing that would have to be governed by extraordinary modes.For even if the extraordinary mode did good for the present, nonetheless the example does evil, for it introduces a habit of breaking orders for the good, and then under this color one might break them for evil.Therefore a republic will never be perfect if it has not provided for all things with its laws, and for every accident the remedy is determined and the mode of governing it given.Concluding therefore, I say that those republics that in urgent dangers do not have the refuge of either a Dictator or a similar authority will always be ruined by grave accidents.

It should be noted with respect to this new order how wisely the Romans provided the mode of electing it.Since the creation of a Dictator meant a certain shaming of the consuls who, being heads of the city, had to come under a single obedience like the others, and supposing that this would give rise to disdain from the citizens, they wanted that authority of election to be placed in the Consuls; thinking that if the accident occurred that Rome would have need of this regal power, they would voluntarily establish it themselves, and that since they established it their pain would be less.For the wounds and every other evil that a man himself does spontaneously and by choice hurt a great deal less than those that you have suffered from others.Even afterwards in later times the Romans used to give authority to the Consul, instead of to the Dictator, with these words: "Let the Consul see to it that the republic suffers no harm."[127]And in order to return to our matter, I conclude that it was the neighbors of Rome, seeking to overpower it, who made [the city] order that which not only enabled it to defend itself, but enabled it with more force, counsel, and authority to harm them.

[127] *Videat Consul, ne Respublica quid detrimenti capiat.*

35. The cause whereby the creation in Rome of the Decemvirate was injurious to the liberty of that republic, notwithstanding that it was created by public and free suffrages.

It seems contrary to that which was discussed above (that it is the authority which is taken with violence, not that which is given with suffrages that injures the republic) the election of ten citizens created by the Roman People to make laws in Rome, who in time became tyrants, and without any respect they took the liberty [away] of that [city].[128] Here one ought to consider the modes of giving authority and the time for which it is given. When free authority is given for a long time, calling the time long when it is a year or more, it is always done dangerously, and will have good or bad effects depending on those to whom it will be given. If one will consider the authority the Ten had and that of the Dictators one will see that beyond comparison the Ten had the greater. For with the creation of the Dictator there remained the Tribunes, Consuls, Senate with their authority, nor could the Dictator take it from them; and if he could deprive one man of the Consulate, and another of the Senate, he could not do away with the Senatorial order and make new laws. In such a mode the Senate, Consuls, and Tribunes, remaining with their authority, came to be like a guard over him, preventing him from escaping the straight way. But in the creation of the Ten everything occurred to the contrary, for the Consuls and Tribunes were done away with, and they were given the authority to make laws and do everything else as [though they were] the Roman People. Thus finding themselves alone, without Consuls, Tribunes, without appeal to the People; and because of this there came to be no one who watched them, they were able in their second year, moved by the ambition of Appius, to become insolent. From this one ought to note that when it is said that an authority given by free suffrages never harms any republic, it presupposes that a people will so conduct itself as never to give it except within proper circumstances and proper times; but when, either by being deceived or whatever other cause that might have blinded it, it is induced to give [authority] imprudently in the mode that the Roman People gave it to the Ten, that will always happen as happened then. One might easily prove this, if one considers those causes that maintained the D[ictators] good and that which made the Ten bad and considers also what those republics that have been taken to be well-ordered have done when they gave authority for a long time, as the Spartans gave it

[128] Livy, III 31-55.

to their Kings, and as the Venetians gave it to their Dukes.For one will see that the mode of both these to be the posting of guards who made it such that they could not use that authority badly.Nor is it helpful in this case that the matter not be corrupted, for an absolute authority in very short time corrupts the matter in making friends and partisans.Nor does it harm him to be poor or not have kindred, for riches and every other favor quickly follow him, as we shall discuss in particular with respect to the creation of the said Ten.

36.Citizens who have held greater honors ought not disdain lesser ones.

The Romans had made Marcus Fabius and G. Manilius consuls, and they won a most glorious battle against the Veientes and the Etruscans; in which Quintus Fabius, brother of the consul, and who had been consul the previous year, was killed.[129] Here one ought to consider how much the orders of that city were apt to make it great, and how other republics are deceived who turn away from them in their modes. For although the Romans were very great lovers of glory, nonetheless they did not regard it as a dishonorable thing now to give obedience to one whom at another time they commanded, and to find themselves in that army of which they had been princes.That custom is contrary to the opinion, orders, and modes of the citizens of our times; and in Venice there is still this error, that a citizen having had a great rank is ashamed of accepting a lesser one, and the city is content that he is able to turn it down.This thing, while it may be honorable for the private, is wholly useless for the public.For a republic should place more hope and more confidence in a citizen who descends from a great rank to govern a lesser, than in one who rises from a lesser to govern a greater.For to believe in the latter cannot be reasonable, unless men are seen around him who are held in such reverence or are of such virtue that his newness could then be moderated with their counsel and their authority.And had there been in Rome this custom, which is in Venice and other modern republics and kingdoms, that he who was at one time Consul would never wish to go into the armies if not as Consul, there would have arisen infinite things unfavorable to a free life -- through the errors that new men make, through the ambition that they could have used better, and by not having men around them in whose aspect they would have feared to err, and thus they would have come to be more unshackled, and that would have turned wholly to the detriment of the public.

[129] Livy, II 46-47.

37. What scandals the agrarian law begot in Rome, and how making a law in a republic that looks far back and is against an ancient custom of the city is most scandalous.

It is the judgment of ancient writers that men are usually distressed by evil and disgusted with the good, and that either of these two passions gives rise to the same effects. For whenever the necessity of fighting is taken from men, they fight from ambition, which is so powerful in human breasts that never is it abandoned, whatever the rank to which they rise. The cause is that nature has created men in such a mode that they can desire everything but they cannot attain to everything; such that desire being always greater than the power to acquire, it results in [their] being ill-content with that which is possessed and little satisfied with it. From this arises the variation in their fortune; for men desiring, partly to have more, partly fearing to lose what has been acquired, they come to enmities and war from which arises the ruin of that province and the exaltation of another. I have made this discourse because it was not enough for the Roman Plebs to assure itself of the nobles by the creation of the Tribunes, to which desire it was constrained by necessity. Then having obtained that, it began to fight from ambition, and to wish to divide with the Nobility honors and property[130] as a thing esteemed more by men. From this arose the disease that begot the contention about the agrarian law,[131] which in the end was the cause of the destruction of that Republic. And because well-ordered republics have kept the public wealthy and their citizens poor, it must be that there was a defect in this law in the city of Rome -- which was either not made at the beginning in such a mode so as not to have to be drawn up [again] every day, or that making it was deferred for so long that it would have been scandalous to look far back, or being ordered well at first it was corrupted in its use. In whatever mode it happened, never was this law spoken of in Rome without that city being turned upside down.

This law had two principal headings. The first provided that no citizen could possess more than so many *jugeri*[132] of land; and the other that the fields which they took from the enemy were to be divided among the Roman people. Two sorts of offenses were therefore done to the nobles: for those who possessed more goods[133] than the law permitted (which was the greater part of the nobles) were to be deprived of it; and dividing among the

---

[1] *sustanze* -- substance.
[131] Livy, II 41-43.
[132] *iugerum* -- a measure of land two-thirds of an English acre.
[133] *beni* -- goods, personal property.

plebs the goods of the enemy, it took away from them that way of becoming rich.Therefore since these offenses were done to powerful men and it seemed to them that to stand against it was to defend the public, that whenever it was brought up, as I said, it turned that whole city upside down.The nobles with patience and industry temporized with it, either by sending out an army, or by that Tribune being set up that he might oppose another Tribune, or sometimes to surrender in part, or perhaps to send out a colony to that place that was to be parcelled out -- as happened in the country of Antium, about which there arose this dispute regarding the law, and a colony taken from Rome was sent out to that place, to which was consigned that said country.Here Titus Livy uses a notable expression, saying that it was with difficulty that one found in Rome someone who would give his name to that said colony, so much did the plebeian [class] prefer to desire things in Rome than to possess them in Antium.[134]This humor arising from the law went on thus troubling them for a time, such that the Romans began to conduct their armies into the extreme parts of Italy or outside of Italy, and after that time it seems to have ceased.This came about because the fields possessed by the enemies of Rome were far from the eyes of the Plebs, and in places which were not easy to cultivate, and came to be less desired by them.Besides the Romans punished their enemies less in the same way, and when they did despoil some town[135] of its countryside, they placed colonies there.Hence for these causes, this law remained as it were asleep until the Gracchi, and being then awakened by them it wholly ruined Roman liberty; for it found the power of its adversaries redoubled and because of this so burning was the hatred between the Plebs and the Senate, that it came to arms and blood, outside of every mode and civil custom.So that the public magistrates not being able to remedy it, nor did any of the factions have any hope in them, recourse was made to private remedies, and each of the parties thought of establishing a head who would defend them. It came about in this scandal and disorder that the plebs placed its reputation on Marius, such that he was made consul four times, and so continuous with few intervals was his consulate that he was able to make himself consul three other times. The Nobility, having no remedy against this pestilence, turned to favor Sulla, and with his being made head of his party they came to civil wars; and after much blood and variation of fortune the nobility was left superior.These humors were resuscitated at the time of Caesar and Pompey, for Caesar becoming the head of the party of Marius, and Pompey that of Sulla, coming to blows

[134] Livy, III 1.
[135] *terra*

Caesar was left superior, the first tyrant in Rome, so that never again was that city free.

Such then was the beginning and the end of the agrarian law.And although we have shown elsewhere how the enmities of Rome between the Senate and the Plebs kept Rome free, by bringing forth laws favoring liberty out of these, the end of this agrarian law seems to be not in conformity with such a conclusion.I say that this does not dissuade me from that opinion.For to such an extent is the ambition of the great, that if by various ways and in various modes it is not kept down in a city, it quickly brings that city to its ruin.In such a mode that if the contention over the agrarian law endured for three hundred years before Rome was enslaved, she might perchance have been led much more quickly into servitude if the plebs, with this law and with its other appetites, would not have always reined in the ambition of the nobles.One still sees this, for men esteem property more than honors.For the Roman Nobility always ceded in honors to the plebs without any extraordinary scandals, but when it came to property,[136] so great was its obstinacy in defending it, that the plebs resorted to those extraordinary [things] that were discussed above in order to give vent to its appetite.These disorders were set in motion by the Gracchi, whose intention ought to be praised more than [their] prudence.For, wishing to take away a disorder that has grown in a republic, and because of this to make a law that looks far back, it is an ill-considered policy and, as has been discussed at length above,[137] it does nothing else but accelerate that evil to which that disorder conducts you; but temporizing with it, either the evil comes much later or, before [it completes] its end, with time extinguishes itself.

38.Weak republics are irresolute and do not know how to deliberate; and if ever they decide on something, it arises more from necessity than from choice.

Since there was in Rome a very grave pestilence, this made it appear to the Volscians and the Equi that the time had come of [their] being able to overcome Rome; and these two peoples formed a very great army and attacked the Latins and the Hernici.[138]With their countryside being wasted, the Latins and the Hernici were constrained to make that understood at Rome and to pray that they might be defended by the Romans.To which, the Romans, since they were burdened with disease, responded that they

[136] *roba* -- stuff, personal property, or goods.
[137] I 33.
[138] Livy, III 6.

should take the part of defending themselves on their own and with their own arms, for they could not defend them.Here one recognizes the generosity and prudence of that Senate, and how always in every fortune it wished to be prince in the deliberations that its own [allies] would have had to take; nor were they ever ashamed to decide on a thing contrary to its way of life[139] and other deliberations that had been made, when necessity commanded it.

I say this, because at another time the same Senate had forbidden those said peoples to arm and defend themselves; so that to a Senate that was less prudent this would have appeared to be a fall from its rank to concede to them that they defend themselves.But it always judged things as they ought to be judged, and always took the part which was less bad as the better -- for it was bad that it be known that they could not defend their subjects, bad that it be known that they were to be armed without [the Romans], for the reasons said and for many others that are understood; nonetheless, knowing that they would be armed by necessity in some way, since the enemy was on their back, they took the honorable part and wished that what they had to do they would do with its permission; such that having disobeyed by necessity, it would not become accustomed to disobeying by choice.Although this seems to be a part that every republic ought to take, yet weak and ill-counseled republics do not know how to take it, nor do they know how to have honor in similar necessities.Duke Valentino had taken Faenza, and he made Bologna yield to his terms, then wishing to return to Rome by Tuscany, he sent to Florence one of his men to ask for passage for himself and for his army.They consulted in Florence as to how they were to govern this thing, and no one ever advised conceding to him.In this the Roman mode was not followed, for since the duke was armed to the highest degree and the Florentines almost disarmed that they could not have prevented the passage, and it was much more to their honor that it appeared that he had passed with their will than by force; for while it was wholly to their disgrace, it would have been less in some degree if they had governed otherwise.But the worst part that weak republics take is to be irresolute; in such a mode that all the parts that they take, they take by force, and if they come to take some good one, they do it enforcedly and not by their prudence.

I wish to give two other examples of this, that happened in our times in the state of our city.[140]

In 1500, King Louis XII of France having retaken Milan, was desirous of rendering up Pisa to have the fifty thousand ducats that the Florentines

---

[2] *modo di vivere*

[3] *nello stato della nostra città* -- i.e., "when our city had a republican state"?

promised after such restitution. He sent his armies against Pisa, captained by Monsieur de Beaumont who, although French, was nonetheless a man in whom the Florentines had much confidence.This army and this captain moved between Cascina and Pisa in order to attack the walls, where, delaying some days to order the storming [of the walls], Pisan ambassadors came to Beaumont and offered to give the city to the French army with these conditions, that upon the faith of the king he promised not put [the city] into the hands of the Florentines until after four months.The Florentines wholly rejected this policy,[141] so that what followed was their going on with the siege and then [having to] retire from it in shame.Nor did they reject the policy for any other reason than that they distrusted the faith of the king, [even though] he was the one into whose hands they had been forced to place themselves through the weakness of their counsels.On the other hand, they did not trust him -- not seeing how much better the king could have rendered Pisa to them by his being inside it, and if he did not render the city to discover his mind,[142] than to his promising it when he did not have it, and to be forced to buy those promises.So that it would have been much more useful if they had consented that Beaumont had taken [the city] under whatever promise made: as was afterwards shown through experience in 1502 when, Arezzo having rebelled, Monsieur Imbault came with a French army sent by the king of France to aid the Florentines.Having come into the neighborhood of Arezzo, after a little while he began to negotiate with the Aretines, who, under a certain pledge[143] wished to give up the town[144] as had the Pisans.Florence rejected such a policy, and when Monsieur Imbault saw this, since it appeared to him that the Florentines understood little, he began to negotiate the accords himself, without the participation of the commissioners, so that he concluded it in his own mode, and under this [accord] he entered Arezzo with his men, giving the Florentines to understand that they were mad and did not understand the things of the world, and that if they wanted Arezzo they should let the king know it, who would be far better able to give it to them having his men inside of that city instead of outside it.The Florentines never stopped tearing to pieces and blaming the said Imbault; nor did it ever stop until at last they recognized that if Beaumont had been Imbault, they would have had Pisa as they did Arezzo.

---

[141] *partito*
[5] *animo*
[6] *fede*
[7] *terra*

And thus, to return to the proposition, irresolute republics never take up good policies except by force, for their weakness never lets them decide whenever anything is doubtful; and if that doubt is not cancelled by a violence that drives them on, they stand always in suspense.

39.In diverse peoples the same accidents are often seen.

He who considers things present and ancient easily understands how in all cities and all peoples there are the same desires and the same humors, and that these were always there.In such a mode that it is very easy for one who examines past things with diligence to foresee the future of any republic and to apply those remedies that from antiquity have been used, or if one does not find them used, to think of new ones because of the similarity of accidents.But because these considerations are neglected or not understood by readers, or if they are understood they are not known to those who govern, the consequence is that there are always the same scandals in every time.

The city of Florence having after '94[145]lost part of her imperium, such as Pisa and other towns, was necessitated to make war on those who had occupied them; and because he who occupied them was powerful, it followed that [the Florentines] spent much in the war and fruitlessly.From much spending there came many taxes, and from taxes infinite complaints by the people.And because this war was administered by a magistracy of ten citizens who were called the Ten of War, the universality began to despise them as the cause of the war and the expense of it, and began to persuade itself that to abolish those said magistrates was to abolish the war; such that having to re-elect them, they did not do so but changed them, and the [offices] allowed to expire, and they assigned the duties[146]to the Signory.That deliberation was so pernicious that not only did it not abolish the war, as the universality had persuaded itself, but removed those men who had administered it with prudence; and there followed such disorder that, besides Pisa, they lost Arezzo and many other places; such that the people amending their error, and as the cause of illness was the fever and not the physician, re-established the magistracy of the Ten.This same humor arose in Rome against the name of the consuls, for that people seeing one war after the other arising and never being able to rest and, where they should have thought that these arose from the ambition of neighbors who wished to overcome them, they thought that these arose from the ambition of the nobles, who, since

[145] 1494, the year Charles VIII of France invaded Italy.
[146] *azioni* -- actions

they were not able within Rome to chastise the plebs, defended as these were by the tribunician power, wished them to be led out of Rome under consuls in order to oppress them where they did not have any aid.Because of this, [the people] thought that it was necessary to abolish consuls or regulate in some mode their power so that they would not have authority over the people either abroad or at home.The first who attempted this law was one Terentillus, a tribune, who proposed that there should be created five men who should consider the power of the consuls and limit it.[147] That greatly angered the nobility, since it appeared to them that the majesty of the imperium had been wholly diminished, such that there would not remain any more rank for the nobility in that Republic.Nonetheless, such was the obstinacy of the tribunes that the consular name was extinguished;[148] and they were in the end content, after [establishing] some other orders, rather to create tribunes with consular power than to have consuls; so much did they hate the name rather than their authority.[149] And thus they went for a long time, until they finally recognized their error, and as the Florentines returned to the Ten, so they re-created the consuls.

40.The creation of the Decemvirate in Rome, and that which is to be noted in it: where among other things one ought to consider how one is able either to save a Republic through a similar accident or to oppress it.

Wishing to discuss in particular the accidents that arose in Rome because of the creation of the Decemvirate,[150] it does not seem to me excessive to narrate first all that followed suchlike creation, and afterwards to dispute those parts that were notable in these actions; which are many and [worthy] of great consideration, as much for those who wish to keep a republic free as for those who plan to subject it.For one will see in this discourse many errors made by the Senate and plebs unfavorable to liberty, and many errors done by Appius, head of the Decemvirate, unfavorable to that tyranny that he presupposed to establish in Rome. After many disputations and contentions had followed between the people and the nobility to make firm new laws in Rome, whereby the liberty of that state might be stabilized, it was agreed to send Spurius Postumus with two other citizens to Athens for copies of the laws that Solon had given that city, so that upon them they could found the Roman laws.When these had gone and

[147] Livy, III 9.
[148] Livy, IV 6.
[149] Livy, VI 35.
[150] Livy, III 31-58.

returned, they came to the creation of those who would examine and establish those said laws, and they created ten citizens for one year, among whom was created Appius Claudius, a shrewd and restless man.In order that they could without any respect create such laws, they abolished all the other magistracies in Rome, and in particular the tribunes and consuls; and they abolished the appeal to the people, in such a mode that magistracy came to be entirely the prince of Rome.Then to Appius was reduced all the authority of his other companions because he received the favors of the plebs, for he had given himself a popular mode with his demonstrations, so that it appeared to be a marvel how he had so quickly taken on a new nature and a new genius, when he was taken to be a cruel persecutor of the plebs before this time.

These Ten governed civilly enough, not having more than twelve lictors, who went before the one who had been made chief among them.Although they had absolute authority, nonetheless when they had to punish a Roman citizen for homicide, they cited him in the presence of the people, and let the latter judge him. They wrote their laws on ten tables, and before they confirmed them placed them before the public so that everyone would be able to dispute them, so that one might know if there were any defect there, in order to be able to amend them before confirmation.With respect to this, Appius gave rise to a rumor in Rome that if two others were added to these ten tables, it would give to them their perfection; such that this opinion gave occasion to the people to re-elect the Ten for another year -- to which the people agreed voluntarily both because the consuls would not be re-established, and because it seemed to them that they could do without the tribunes since [the Ten] were judges in cases, as was said above. Having taken the policy of re electing them, all the nobility scrambled to seek these honors, and among the first was Appius, and he showed such humanity towards the plebs in asking for [office], that he began to be suspected by his companions:"And they certainly did not believe that such grace in so much pride was out of affability!"[151]Hesitating to oppose him openly, they decided to do it with art, and although he was least in time [of service] of all [the candidates], they gave him the authority of proposing the future Ten to the people, believing that he would observe the limits [set by] others in not proposing himself, this being a thing not done in Rome and ignominious:"He snatched an opportunity from what was truly [meant as] an obstacle,"[152] and named himself among the first, to the marvel and displeasure of all the nobles; he afterwards named nine others suited to his purpose.That

[151] *Credebant enim haud gratuitam in tanta superbia comitatem fore*. Livy, III 35.
[152] *Ille vero impedimentum pro occasione arripuit*. Livy, III 35.

new creation, made for another year, began to show the people and the nobility their error.For suddenly "Appius put an end to being another person,"[153] and began to show his innate pride, and soon imbued his companions with his usages.In order to frighten the people and the Senate, they replaced the twelve lictors with a hundred and twenty.

The fear was equal [on all sides] for some days; but [the Ten] began to favor the Senate and batter the plebs, and if anybody who was battered by one [of the Decemvirs] appealed to another [Decemvir], he was treated worse in the appeal than in the first sentence.In such a mode that the plebs, having known its error and, full of affliction, began to look into the face of the nobles: "and from there to catch a breath of liberty, from whence so fearing servitude they had brought the republic to its condition."[154]The Nobility was gratified with their affliction: "that they themselves wearied with present circumstances desired consuls."[155]The days came that ended the year: the two tables of laws were finished but not published.From this the Ten took the opportunity for continuing the magistracy, and they began to take the state with violence, and to make satellites of the noble youth, to whom they gave property that they had condemned: "With these gifts the young men were corrupted and preferred their license to the liberty of all."[156]At this time it arose that the Sabines and the Volscians began to stir up war against the Romans, and in their fear of which the Ten began to see the weakness of their state, for without the Senate they could not order war, and assembling the Senate seemed to be the loss of their state.However they were necessitated to take this last policy; and they assembled together the senators. Many of the senators spoke against the pride of the Ten, and in particular of Valerius and Horatius; and their authority would have been wholly extinguished had the Senate, through envy of the plebs, not wanted to show their authority, thinking that if the Ten laid down the magistracy voluntarily that it might be that the plebeian Tribunes would not be re-established.They decided therefore on war; they went out with two armies led in part by the said Ten.Appius remained to govern the city, where it arose that he fell in love with Virginia.And since he wished to take her by force, Virginius, the father, to free her killed her; whence there followed tumults in Rome and in the armies which, converging together with the rest of the Roman plebs, went off to the Mons Sacer, where they stayed until the Ten laid the

[153] *Appius finem fecit ferendae alienae personae.* Livy, III 36.
[154] *et inde libertatis captare auram, unde servitutem timendo, in eum statum rempublican adduxerunt.* Livy, III 37.
[155] *Ut ipsi, taedio praesentium, Consules desiderarent.* Ibid.
[156] Quibus donis juventus corrumpebatur, et malebat licentiam suam quam omnium libertatem. Ibid.

magistracy and there were created the Tribunes and the Consuls, and Rome returned to the form of her ancient liberty.

One is to note then by this text, first, that this inconvenience of creating tyranny arose in Rome for the same causes that most tyrannies arise in cities, and this is from the too great desire of the people to be free, and the too great desire of nobles to command.When they cannot agree to make a law in favor of liberty, but one of the parties throws itself [into] favoring someone, then does tyranny quickly arise.The people and the nobles of Rome agreed to create the Ten, and to create them with such authority, because of the desire that each of the parties had: the one of extinguishing the consular name, the other of the tribunate.When it was created, since it appeared to the plebs that Appius had become popular and was battering the Nobility, the people turned to favor him.When a people is led to make this error, to give reputation to one because he batters those whom it has in hatred, and when that one is wise, it always will happen that he will become tyrant of that city.For he will apply himself together with the favor of the people to extinguishing the Nobility, and he will never turn to oppressing the people until [the Nobility] will have been extinguished; and at that time, the people having recognized that it is enslaved, there will be nowhere to take refuge.This mode has been taken by all those who have founded tyrannies in republics and, if Appius had taken this mode, his tyranny would have had more life and it would not have failed so quickly.But he did all the contrary, nor could one have governed more imprudently; for to keep the tyranny he made himself an enemy of those who had given it to him and could have maintained it for him, and an enemy[157] of those who had not concurred in giving it to him and who could not have maintained it for him; and he lost all those who had been his friends, and he sought to have as friends those who could not be his friends.For though the nobles desire to tyrannize, that part of the Nobility that finds itself outside the tyranny is always inimical to the tyrant.He can never gain them all because of the great ambition and great avarice that is in them, for the tyranny cannot have such riches and such honors that he can satisfy all.And thus Appius, in leaving the people and drawing near to the nobles, made a most evident error, both for the reasons said above and because to wish to hold a thing with violence it must needs be that one who forces be more powerful than one who is forced.

Whence it arises that those tyrants who have the universal as a friend and the great as enemies are more secure, by their violence being sustained

[157] Textual evidence is for "enemy", but it is said that the sense requires "friend." See Allan Gilbert's translation and compare Mansfield, p. 130.

by greater forces than those of the ones who have the people inimical and the Nobility friendly. For with that favor intrinsic forces will suffice to preserve them, as these were for Nabis, tyrant of Sparta, when all Greece and the Roman people attacked him.[158]He assured himself of a few nobles, having the People friendly, and with that he defended himself;which he could not have done having it as an enemy.In that other condition,[159]by having few friends within, intrinsic forces are not sufficient, but he must look for them outside.And these have to be of three sorts: one is to have satellite foreigners who guard your person, the other to arm the countryside[160]to do the office that would have been done by the plebs, the third is to ally with powerful neighbors who defend you.Whoever takes these modes and observes them well, even if he has the people inimical, can in some mode save himself.But Appius was not able to gain to himself the countryside, since the countryside and Rome were one and the same thing; and that which he could have done he did not know how, such that he was ruined in his first beginnings.The Senate and the People made very great errors in this creation of the Decemvirate; for, [though] it comes about as has been said above in that discourse that was made about the Dictator, that those magistrates who appoint themselves [and] not those who are appointed by the people are harmful to liberty, nonetheless the people ought, when it orders the magistracies, to make them in such a mode that they would have to have some respect about becoming wicked.Where they ought to have placed a guard to keep them good, the Romans took it away, making it the sole magistrate in Rome and annulling all the others, because of the excessive wish (as we have said above) that the Senate had of extinguishing the Tribunes, and the plebs of extinguishing the Consuls, which blinded them in such a mode that they came to agree on such a disorder.For men, as King Ferdinand has said, often act like certain smaller birds of prey, in whom there is such a desire to follow their prey, to which nature incites them, that they do not sense above them another larger bird about to kill them.One knows therefore from this discourse, as I proposed at the beginning, the error of the Roman people if it wished to save liberty, and the errors of Appius if he wished to seize the tyranny.

---

[158] See *Prince*, IX.

[159] *grado* -- condition or situation: it can also be translated as degree or ran, to read: "As for that other rank,..." That is to choose the other rank in society, the Nobility, in which case the tyrant would have sufficient forces within."

[160] *il contado* -- the country people or peasantry as opposed to the plebeians or commons of the city.

41.To leap from humility to pride, from pity to cruelty without due degrees is an imprudent and useless thing.

Besides the other means badly used by Appius to maintain the tyranny, it was not of little moment to leap so quickly from one quality to another.[161]For his astuteness in deceiving the plebs pretending to be a popular man, was well-used; well-used also were the means taken whereby the Ten were re-elected; well-used also was the audacity of creating himself against the opinion of the Nobility; well-used was the creation of companions to his own liking.But it was certainly not well-used, as he didthis, as I accordingly say above, to change nature in one blow; and from a friend to show himself an enemy to the plebs, from being human to being proud, from being easy to being difficult, and to do it so quickly that without any excuse every man had to know the falsity of his mind.[162]For he who appears good at one time and wishes for his own purposes to become bad, he ought to do so by due degrees; and in such a mode conduct himself [in accordance] with the occasions, that before the different nature takes from you former supporters,[163] that it has given you so many new that you do not bring about a diminishing of your authority; otherwise, finding yourself discovered and without friends, you are ruined.

42.How easily men can be corrupted.

One notes also in this matter of the Decemvirate, how easily men are corrupted and make themselves become of a contrary nature, however good and however well trained they may be, considering how the young men that Appius had chosen to have about him, began to be friends of that tyranny for the sake of a little profit[164] that it brought them; and how Quintus Fabius, one of the number of the second Ten, being a very good man,[165]blinded by a little ambition and persuaded by the evil will of Appius, changed from his good ways to wicked ones, and became like him.[166] If this is examined well, it will make the legislators of republics or of kingdoms all the more ready to bridle human appetites and take from them all hope of being able to err with impunity.

---

[161] Livy, III 56.
[162]*animo*
[163] *favori vecchi* -- i.e., those who favored you of old.
[164]*un poco di utilità* -- lit., a little utility.
[165]*uomo ottimo* - lit., a best man, or true gentleman.
[166]Livy, III 41.

43.Those who fight for their own glory are good and faithful soldiers.

One can also consider, in the treatise written above, how much difference there is between an army which is contented and fights for its own glory and one which is ill disposed and fights for someone else's ambition.For where the Roman armies were always accustomed to being victorious under the Consuls, under the Decemvirs they always lost.[167]From this example one can know part of the causes of the uselessness of mercenary soldiers, who have no other cause to keep them firm than a little stipend that you give them.That cannot be enough of a cause either to make them faithful, or to be so much your friends that they would wish to die for you.For in these armies there is no affection for the one for whom they fight such that it makes them become his partisans, nor will they ever be able to have such virtue that it suffices to resist an enemy who has a little virtue.And because neither this love nor this competitiveness can arise in anyone other than your subjects, it is necessary in wishing to have a state, wishing to maintain a republic or a kingdom, to arm oneself with his subjects, as one sees all those have done who with their armies have gained great profits.The Roman armies had that same virtue under the Ten, but because there was not in them that same disposition, they did not bring about their usual effects.But as soon as the magistracy of the Ten was extinguished, and they began to soldier as free men, that same spiritedness[168] returned to them, in consequence their enterprises had a happy ending, according to their former custom.[169]

44.A multitude without a head is useless; and how one ought not threaten first and then ask for authority.

The Roman plebs, because of the accident of Virginia, had retired armed to the Mons Sacer.[170]The Senate sent its ambassadors to demand with what authority they had abandoned their captains and retired to the Mount.So esteemed was the authority of the Senate that of the plebs, not having heads among them, no one dared to respond.Titus Livy says that it was not that they lacked matter for a response, but that they lacked those who could make the response.Such a thing shows precisely the uselessness of a multitude without a head.This disorder was recognized by Virginius, and by his order twenty military tribunes were created who would be their heads

[167] Livy, III 40.
[168] *animo*
[169] Livy, III 61
[170] The Sacred Mount. Livy, III 44-53.

to respond and meet with the Senate.And having asked that Valerius and Horatius be sent them, to whom they would say their will, these two did not want to go before the Ten laid down the magistracy; and having gone up above on the mountain where the plebs was, they were asked by it that Tribunes of the Plebs be created, that there be an appeal to the People from every magistracy, and that all of the Ten be given them, whom they wanted to burn alive.Valerius and Horatius praised their first demands, and blamed the last one as impious,[171] saying: "Cruelty you condemn, into cruelty you rush;"[172]and they advised them that they ought omit making mention of the Ten, and that they be concerned with re-taking their authority and power, and they would not lack afterwards a mode of satisfying themselves.From which one recognizes plainly what stupidity and little prudence there is in asking for a thing to say first, I wish to do such and such evil with it.For one ought not show one's mind,[173] but wish to seek to obtain that which one desires in every mode.For it suffices to ask one for arms without saying, I wish to kill you with that, since you are able, after you have arms in hand, to satisfy your appetite.

45.It is a bad example not to observe a law that has been made, and especially by its author; and to refresh injuries anew in a city every day is most dangerous to one who governs it.

The agreement having been made and Rome had returned to its old form, Virginius cited Appius before the people to defend his cause.[Appius] showed himself, accompanied by many nobles.Virginius commanded that he be put in prison.Appius began to shout and appeal to the people.Virginius said that he was not worthy to have that appeal which he had destroyed and have as a defender the people whom he had offended.Appius replied that they must not violate that appeal that they had been so desirous of having ordered.He was, however, incarcerated and before the day of judgment he killed himself.[174]Although the wicked life of Appius merited any punishment, nonetheless to violate the laws was a thing little [suited to] civil [life],[175] and so much more one that had been just made.For I do not believe that in a republic there is a worse example than to make a law and not observe it, and even more so when it is not observed by him who made it.Florence re-

[2]*impia* -- also, pitiless.
[3]*Crudelitatem damnatis, in crudelitatem ruitis*. Livy, III 53.
[4]*animo*
[174] Livy, III 54-56.
[175]*cosa poco civile*

ordered her state after '94,[176] with the aid of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, whose writings show the doctrine, prudence, and virtue of his mind.[177]Among other constitutions to secure the citizens, a law had been made that one could appeal to the people the sentences that the Eight and the Signoria gave in state cases[178] (he had been trying to persuade them of this law for a long time, and had obtained it with the greatest difficulty).It happened that soon after its confirmation the Signoria condemned to death five citizens on a count of treason,[179] and when they wished to appeal they were not permitted to do so, and the law was not observed.That took more reputation away from that friar than any other accident, for if that appeal was useful, he ought to have observed it;if it was not useful, he should not have made it win [passage].This accident was even more noticed, since the friar in many sermons he made, after that law was broken, never condemned or excused its having been broken.For he did not wish to condemn it since it was a thing that turned to his purpose, and he could not excuse it. Having discovered his mind to be ambitious and partisan, his reputation was taken away, and brought on him a heavy charge.

It also much harms a state to refresh every day in the mind of your citizens new humors with new injuries that is done to this one or that, as happened in Rome after the Decemvirate.For all the Ten and other citizens were accused and condemned at different times, in such a mode that there was a very great terror in all the nobility, judging that there would never be an end put to similar condemnations until in the end all the nobility would be destroyed.And it would have generated great inconvenience in that city, if from Marcus Duillius, a tribune, there had not been a provision: he made an edict, that for one year it would not be licit for anyone to cite or accuse any Roman citizen -- and that reassured all the nobility.[180]Whence one sees how harmful it is to a republic or a prince to have the minds[181] of subjects in suspense and fear with continual penalties and offenses.Without doubt one cannot have a more pernicious order, for men who begin to suspect that evil may befall them secure themselves in every mode in dangers and become more audacious and less respectful in attempting new things.Therefore it is necessary either not to offend anyone ever, or to do the offenses at one stroke and afterwards to reassure men and give them cause to quiet and rest [their] minds.

---

[176] 1494
[177] *animo*
[178] *casi di stato* -- i.e., such as involved crimes against the state.
[179] *conto di stato*
[180] Livy, III 59.
[181] *animi*

46.Men climb from one ambition to another; and first one seeks not to be offended, afterwards one offends others.

The Roman People having recovered liberty, and returned to its pristine rank which was now greater, since new laws had been made confirming its power, and it seemed reasonable that Rome would be quiet for some time.[182]Nonetheless by experience one saw the contrary, for every day there arose new tumults and new discords.Since Titus Livy[183] very prudently gives the reasons whence this arose, it seems to me to be not inappropriate to refer precisely to his words, where he says that either the People or the Nobility always was proud when the other was humbled;and when the plebs were quiet within their bounds, the young nobles began to abuse them and the Tribunes would have few remedies, because they too would have had violence [used against them].The Nobility, on the other part, although it seemed to them that their youth were too ferocious, nonetheless held it dear that having to go beyond the [accepted] mode, that their own do so and not the plebs.Thus the desire to defend liberty brought it about that each one when it prevailed would oppress the other.The order of these accidents is such that when men seek not to fear, they begin to make others fear, and that injury they kept from themselves they put on another, as if it were necessary either to offend or be offended.One sees by this one mode among others [by which] republics break down, and in what mode men climb from one ambition to another, and how that Sallustian maxim, put in the mouth of Caesar, is most true: "That all bad examples arise from good beginnings."[184]The citizens who ambitiously live in a republic seek, as has been said above, first not to be harmed, not only by private [men] but even by the magistrates; in order to do this, they seek friendships, and these they acquire by apparently honest ways, either by helping with money or by defending them from the powerful.And because this appears virtuous, everyone is easily deceived, and because of this no one lays down remedies; so that since he perseveres without obstacles, he becomes of that quality that private citizens fear him and magistrates have respect.When he has climbed to that rank, and no one has prevented his greatness beforehand, he comes to a condition that to wish to oppose him is most dangerous, for the reasons that I have said above of the danger in opposing a difficulty that has already greatly increased in a city.So that the thing is reduced to this term, that one must

[182] Livy, III 54.
[2] Livy, III 65.
[3] *Quod omnia mala exempla bonis initiis orta sunt.* In *De coniuratione Catilinae,* 52.

needs either seek to extinguish him, with the danger of immediate ruin, or, by letting him go on, to enter into a manifest servitude if death or some accident does not liberate you.For having come to the above-written terms, those citizens and magistrates fear to offend him and his friends, [and] he need not labor greatly to make them judge and do injury according to his mode.Whence a republic among its other orders ought to have this one, of seeing to it that its citizens under the shadow of good are not able to do evil, and that they who have reputation be useful to, and not harm, liberty as we shall dispute in its place.

47.Men, however much deceived in generalities, are not deceived in particulars.

The Roman People, as has been said above, being annoyed with the consular name, wishing to be able either to make plebeian men Consuls or to have their authority diminished, the Nobility in order not to stain the consular authority with either the one or other thing, took a middle way, and was content that there be created four Tribunes with consular power, who might be either plebeians or nobles.The plebs was content with this, for it appeared that the Consulate was extinguished and it had its share in the highest rank.There arose from this a notable case on coming to the election of these Tribunes.Since they were able to elect all plebeians, the Roman People elected all nobles.Whence Titus Livy says the following words: "The result of these elections teach that there is one mind in the contention for liberty and honor, and another after the contest was laid aside and the judgment is incorrupt."[185]Examining whence this might have proceeded, I believe it proceeds from men much deceiving themselves in general things, and not so much in particulars.It appeared generally to the Roman Plebs that they merited the Consulate for having share in the city, for bearing more of the danger in wars, for it was the plebs who with their own arms[186] kept Rome free and made her powerful.And since it seemed to the [plebs], as has been said, that its desire was reasonable, it turned to obtain this authority in every mode.But when it came to judging its own men particularly, it recognized the weakness of these, and it judged that no one of its own merited that which all of it together seemed to merit.Such that, ashamed of them, it turned to those who merited it.Of this deliberation, deservedly marvelling, Titus Livy says the following words: "Such modesty, equity, and

[185] *Quorum comitiorum eventus docuit, alios animos in contentione libertatis et honoris, alios secundum deposita certamina in incorrupto iudicio esse*. Livy, IV 6.
[186] *braccie* -- arms, i.e., the upper limbs.

high-mindedness, where now will you find it in one, which then was in the whole people?"[187]

In confirmation of this one can adduce one other notable example that followed in Capua after Hannibal had defeated the Romans at Cannae.[188]Because of this defeat all Italy rose up, while Capua was in a state of tumult because of hatred between the people and the Senate.Pacuvius Calanus found himself supreme magistrate at that time, and he recognized the danger to the city in these tumults, and he planned, with his rank, to reconcile the Plebs with the Nobility.Having had this thought, he assembled the Senate and told them of the hatred that the people had against them, and the dangers they risked of being killed by [the people] and the city given to Hannibal since the affairs of the Romans were in distress.He then added that if they wished to leave him to govern this thing he would do it in such a mode as would unite them together, but that he wanted to lock them in the palace and by giving power to the people to punish them, to save them.The Senators yielded tohis opinion, and he called the people to a meeting, having shut up the Senate in the palace, saying that the time had come when they could tame the pride of the Nobility and take vengeance for the injuries they had received, for he had all of them locked up under his custody.But because he believed that they would not wish their city to be left without government, it was necessary, wishing to kill the old Senators, to create new ones.Therefore he had placed all the names of the Senators in a bag and he would begin to draw them out in their presence.The ones drawn would be killed one after the other, as soon as they had found his successor.He began by taking one out, and with the name a very great noise was raised, calling him a proud man, cruel and arrogant.Pacuvius then asking that they choose another in exchange for him, all the meeting calmed down.After a little space one of the plebs was nominated, at whose name there were those who began to hiss, those who laughed, those who spoke ill of him in one mode and those in another; and thus going on one after the other all those who were nominated were judged unworthy of the senatorial rank.In this mode, Pacuvius, taking over this occasion, said: "Because you have judged that this city would be badly off without the Senate, and you cannot agree on whom to exchange for the old Senators, I think that it would be good that you be reconciled together with them, because this fear in which the senators are in will make them humbled in such a mode that the humanity that you have sought elsewhere, you will find in them."[189]To this they agreed, and the

[187] *Hanc modestiam aequitatemque et altitudinem animi, ubi nunc in uno inveneris, quae tunc populi universi fuit.* Livy, IV 6.
[188] Livy, XXIII 2-4.
[189] This speech is in Italian and is Machiavelli's invention.

union with this order followed; and the deception which they were under was discovered when they were constrained to come to particulars.The people deceive themselves, besides this, in judging things and the accidents generally [inherent] in them, which, after they are known particularly, lack such deceptiveness.

After 1494, the first men[190] of the city having been driven from Florence, and there not being any government ordained [left in that city] but rather a certain ambitious license, and public things going from bad to worse, many of the popular [party] seeing the ruin of the city and not understanding that there was any other cause, accused the ambition of someone powerful as having nourished the disorders to be able to make a state to his liking and take away liberty; and these [men] stood in the piazzas and loggias speaking evil of many citizens and threatening them that if ever they would find themselves to be Signors,[191] they would reveal their deception and punish them.It has often occurred that a man like these has ascended to the supreme magistracy, and when he has climbed to that place and has seen things more closely, he recognizes whence the disorders arise, and the dangers that lurk, and the difficulty of remedying them.Having seen how times and not men cause the disorder, he has suddenly become of a different mind[192] and of a different conduct because the knowledge of particular things has taken away that deceit he presupposed when he was considering them generally.Therefore those who have heard him speak before, when he was a private man, and then see him in the supreme magistracy being quiet, believe that arises not from a truer knowledge of things but because they have been duped and corrupted by the great.Since this has befallen many men at many times, a proverb has arisen from these which said: these men have one mind in the piazza and another in the palazzo.[193]

Considering then all that has been discoursed upon, one sees how one can quickly open the eyes of the people by finding a mode, seeing that a generality deceives them and that they have to descend to particulars, as did Pacuvius in Capua and the Senate in Rome.I also believe that it is possible to conclude that a prudent man ought never avoid popular judgment in particular things regarding the distributions of ranks and dignities, for only in this is the people not deceived, and if [the people] is deceived attimes, it happens so rarely that many more times are a few men who have to make similar distributions deceived.Nor does it seem to me superfluous to show in

---

[190] *principi* -- lit., princes

[191] That is, members of the Signoria or ruling body of Florence.

[192] *animo*

[193] The central municipal building.

the following chapter the order that the Senate took to deceive the people in its distribution.

48.He who wishes that a magistracy not be given to one who is vile or wicked, should have it asked for either by one who is too vile and too wicked or by one who is too noble and too good.

When the Senate doubted whether or not the Tribunes with consular power might be made up of plebeian men, it took one of two modes: either it made the most reputed men of Rome ask for [the office], or by due measures actually corrupted some vile and most ignoble plebeian who, mixed in with the plebs of better quality who ordinarily would have asked for it, would also ask for it.[194]This last mode made the plebs ashamed to give it, and the first made it ashamed to take it.All this goes back to the proposition of the preceding discourse, where it is shown that if the people is deceived about generalities, it is not deceived about particulars.

49.If those cities that have had a free beginning, like Rome, have difficulty in finding laws that maintain them, those that have one immediately servile have almost an impossibility.

How difficult it is in ordering a republic to provide all the laws that would maintain it free is shown very well in the development of the Roman Republic; where, notwithstanding that it was ordered by many laws, first from Romulus, then afterwards from Numa, Tullius Hostilius and Servius, and lastly from the ten citizens created to do similar work, nonetheless they always in the management of that city found new necessity.And it was necessary to create new orders, as happened when [the Ten] created the Censors,[195] which was one of those provisions that helped to keep Rome free for the time that she lived in liberty.For having become the arbiters of the customs of Rome, they were a most powerful cause of the Romans more slowly becoming corrupt.They made a bad error however at the beginning when they created that magistracy, since they created it for [a term of] five years, but before long it was corrected by the prudence of Mamercus, the dictator, who by a new law reduced that said magistracy to eighteen months.The Censors who were then overseeing [affairs] took this so badly that they removed Mamercus from the Senate, and that was a thing much blamed by the plebs and the patricians, and because the history does not

[194] Livy, IV 56-57
[195] Livy, IV 8.

show that Mamercus was able to defend himself, it must be that either there is a defect in the historian or that the orders of Rome were not good in this respect.[196]For it is not good that a republic be ordered in such a mode that a citizen by promulgating a law that conforms with the free life can be harmed without having any remedy.But returning to the beginning of this discourse, I say that one ought consider, in the creation of this new magistrate, that if those cities that have had their beginnings in liberty, and who have ruled themselves, like Rome, have great difficulty in finding good laws whereby to maintain them in liberty, it is no wonder that those cities that have had their beginning immediately servile have not a difficulty but an impossibility in ever ordering themselves in such a mode that they could live civilly and quietly, as one has seen happened in the city of Florence.That city by having had its beginning under the Roman imperium, and having lived always under the government of others, was for a time abject and without any thought for herself.Afterwards an opportunity to breathe came, and she began to make her own orders which, being mixed with the old which were bad, could not be good; and thus she went on managing itself for two hundred years, of which there is a trustworthy record,[197] without ever having been a state that could be truly called a republic.These difficulties that were in her have been those that are always in all those cities that have had beginnings similar to hers.And although many times ample authority might be given to a few citizens by public and free suffrages to be able to reform her, nevertheless they have never ordered her to the common advantage, but always to suit their own party, and this has not brought order but greater disorder to that city.To come to some particular example, I say that among the things that have to be considered by the orderer of a republic is to examine into the hands of what men he should place the power of death[198] over their citizens.This was well-ordered in Rome, for one could ordinarily appeal to the People; and if there also occurred an important thing, where to delay the execution by means of an appeal was dangerous, they had the recourse of the Dictator who could execute it immediately; but they never had recourse to this remedy except by necessity.But Florence, and other cities who were born in her mode, being servile, had this authority placed in a foreigner who, being sent by the prince, performed this office.When afterwards they became free, they maintained this authority in a foreigner, whom they called Captain.Since he could be very easily corrupted by the powerful citizens, it was a most pernicious thing.But afterwards this order being changed by the

[196] Livy, IV 23-24.
[197] *che si ha di vera memoria* -- lit., "of which there is true memory."
[198] *l'autorità del sangue* -- lit., "authority of blood

change of states, they created eight citizens that performed the office of that Captain, which order was bad and became worse for the reasons that at another time have been said, that the few are always the ministers of the few and of the more powerful.From this the city of Venice guarded herself by having ten citizens who, without appeal, could punish every citizen.And because they might not have sufficed to punish the powerful, although they had authority to do so, they have constituted the Forty, and further have willed that the Council of Rogation,[199] which is the greatest council, could punish them. In such a mode that if there be no lack of an accuser, there is no lack of a judge to keep powerful men bridled.Since one sees that in Rome, which was ordered by herself and by so many prudent men, there arose every day new causes whereby she had to make new orders in favor of the free life, it is no marvel then if in other cities that have a more disordered beginning there arose such difficulties that they are never able to reorder themselves.

[199] *Consiglio de' Pregai* -- so-called because the members would be requested (*pregato*) to assist the Doge, especially on foreign and military affairs.

50.No one council or one magistracy ought to be able to stop the actions of the city.

When Titus Quintus Cincinnatus and Gnaeus Julius Mentus were Consuls in Rome they, since they were disunited, had stopped all the actions of that republic.[200]Seeing this, the Senate encouraged them to create the Dictator, in order that he might do what they could not do because of their discords.But the Consuls, being in discord in everything else, were in accord solely on this, of not wanting to create the Dictator.Thus the Senate, not having another remedy, had recourse to the Tribunes for aid, who, with the authority of the Senate, forced the Consuls to obey.Whence one has to note first the utility of the Tribunate, which was not only useful in checking the ambition that the powerful practised against the Plebs but also that which they practised among themselves.The other is that one ought never order in a city that a few might be able to hold back any decisions that ordinarily are necessary for maintaining the republic.For instance, if you give one authority to one council to make a distribution of honors and property, or to a magistrate to administer a piece of business, one must either impose on them a necessity whereby they have to do it in every mode, or to order, whenever they do not wish to do it, that it can and ought to be done by some other.Otherwise this order would be defective and dangerous, as one saw that it was in Rome, if to the obstinacy of those consuls there could not be opposed the authority of the Tribunes.In the Venetian Republic the Great Council distributed all the honors and profits.It happened at times that the universality, through indignation or through some false conviction, did not create successors to the magistrates of the city and of those who administered their empire abroad.This was a very great disorder, for in one stroke the subject towns and the city proper lacked legitimate judges, nor could one obtain anything if the universality of that Council were not either satisfied or undeceived.And this inconvenience would have reduced that city to an ill condition, if there had not been prudent citizens who had provided for it; who, taking a convenient occasion, made a law that all the magistracies who are or were, within the city or outside it, never can be vacated except when their substitutes and successors had been chosen.And thus the opportunity was taken away from that Council of being able to stop public actions to the danger of the republic.

51.A republic or a prince ought to appear to do through liberality what necessity constrains.

[200] Livy, IV 26.

Prudent men always take credit[1] for themselves from things and from all their actions, although necessity constrains them to do these in any case.This prudence was well used by the Roman Senate when it deliberated that it would give public money to men who were on military service, who were accustomed to soldier at their own [expense].But the Senate, seeing how in that mode one could not wage a long war, and because of this one could neither besiege towns nor conduct the armies afar, and judging it to be necessary to be able to do both, decided that the said stipends be given;but it did it in such a mode that it took credit from that which necessity constrained it to do; and so acceptable to the plebs was that present that Rome turned upside down for joy, for it seemed to be a great benefit that they had never hoped to have and that they would never have sought for themselves. Although the Tribunes tried to cancel this credit, showing how it was a thing that worsened not lightened [the burden] of the plebs, since it was necessary to levy taxes to pay this money, nonetheless they could not do it in such a way as to prevent the plebs from accepting it; and that was augmented yet more by the Senate's mode of distributing taxes, for the heavier and greater were those which were imposed on the Nobility and were the first to be paid.

52.To repress the insolence of one who rises to be powerful in a republic, there is no more secure and less scandalous mode than to pre-occupy the ways by which he came to that power.

One sees by the above-written discourse how much credit[201] the nobility acquired with the plebs, because of the seeming demonstrations of its beneficence, by the salaries ordered, and also by the mode of imposing taxes.[202]If the Nobility had maintained the latter order, it would have removed every tumult in that city, and would have taken away from the Tribunes that credit they had with the plebs and consequently their authority.And truly one cannot in a republic, and especially in those that are corrupt, have a better mode, less scandalous and easier, of opposing the ambition of some citizen, than pre-occupying the ways by which one sees that he proceeds to arrive at the rank on which he has designs.If that mode had been used against Cosimo de' Medici, it would have been a much better policy for his adversaries than driving him from Florence; for if those citizens

[1] *grado* -- lit., take degree or rank.
[201] *credito*
[202] Livy, V 4.

who had vied with him had taken his style of favoring the people, they would have succeeded without tumult and without violence in taking out of his hands those arms of which he most availed himself.Piero Soderini had made his reputation in the city of Florence with this alone -- favoring the universal, that gave him, among the universal, reputation as a lover of the liberty of the city.And truly, for those citizens who bore an envy of his greatness, it was very easy, and a thing more honest, less dangerous, and less harmful to the republic, to pre-occupy the ways by which he made himself great than to wish to set themselves against him so that his ruin would be the ruin of all the rest of the republic.For if they had removed from his hand those arms with which he made himself strong (which could easily have done), they would have been able to oppose him without suspicion and without any respect in all the councils and all the public deliberations.And if someone might reply that if the citizens who hated Piero made an error in not pre-occupying the ways with which he had gained reputation among the people, then Piero also came to make an error in not pre-occupying the ways by which his adversaries could make him to fear, Piero merits excuse -- because it was difficult for him to do so, because it was not honest for him to do so, inasmuch as the ways by which he was harmed came from favoring the Medici, with whose support he was battered and in the end ruined.However Piero could not honestly take this policy, by not being able to destroy with good fame that liberty over which he had been placed as a guard.Besides, not being able to give these favors secretly and at one stroke, it was most dangerous for Piero; for if he were discovered to be friendly to the Medici he certainly would have become suspected and hated by the people; whence there would arise for his enemies many more opportunities to crush him than they had before.Men therefore, with respect to every policy, ought to consider its defects and dangers, and not adopt them when there is more danger than usefulness in them, notwithstanding that they have been given counsel[203] that it conforms to their deliberation.For doing otherwise, in that case it would happen to them as happened to Tullius who, wishing to take away those who favored Mark Antony, he increased them; for Mark Antony having been judged an enemy of the Senate and having gathered together into that great army a good number of the soldiers who followed the party of Caesar, Tullius, to take away these soldiers, advised the Senate to give reputation to Octavian and send him with the consuls Hirtius and Pansa against Mark Antony, alleging that the soldiers who followed Mark Antony upon hearing the name of Octavian, nephew of Caesar, would leave the former and adhere to the latter; and thus, Mark Antony being left stripped of

[203] *sentenzia* -- lit., judgment.

favor, it would be easy to crush him.But this thing turned out wholly to the contrary, for Mark Antony gained Octavian who, leaving Tullius and the Senate, went over to him -- and this was the complete destruction of the party of the Optimates.This [result] was easy to conjecture, nor should one have believed that which persuaded Tullius, but rather one should always have taken into account that name that with so much glory had extinguished its enemies and acquired the principate in Rome; nor should one have believed that one could ever have, from either its heirs or its supporters, anything that would be in conformity with the name free.[204]

53.The people many times desire its own ruin, deceived by a false species of goods; and how great hopes and bold promises easily move it.

When the city of the Veientes had been taken by storm, an opinion arose in the Roman people that it would be a most useful thing for the city of Rome if half the Romans went and lived in Veii, the argument being that since that city had a rich countryside, was full of buildings, and near Rome, one could enrich half the Roman citizens and not disturb any civic activity because of the propinquity of the site.The thing seemed to the Senate and to the wiser Romans so useless and harmful that they freely said they were more ready to suffer death than consent to such a decision.In such a mode that, this thing coming to a dispute, the plebs were so indignant against the Senate that it would have come to arms and blood, if the Senate had not made for itself a shield of some old and esteemed citizens, the reverence for whom checked the plebs such that it did not proceed further with its insolence.Here two things are to be noted.The first is that the people deceived by a false image of the good many times desires its own ruin; and if someone in whom it has faith does not make it capable [of seeing] how that is bad and this is good, it brings to republics infinite dangers and injuries.And when by chance the people has no faith in anyone, as it sometimes occurs, since it has been deceived in the past either by things or by men, it comes to ruin of necessity.And Dante says with respect to this, in his discourse in *De Monarchia*,[205] that the people many times shout, "Life to its death!" and, "Death to its life!"From this unbelief it arises many times in republics that good policies are not chosen, as was said above of the Venetians, who were unable, when attacked by so many enemies, to adopt the policy of gaining someone by the restoration of things taken from others (for which the war

[204] *al nome libero*
[205] Dante, *Il Convivio,* I 11.

was begun and the conspiracy of princes against them) before ruin came.Considering therefore of what is easy and of what is difficult to persuade a people, one can make this distinction: either that of which you have to persuade represents *prima facie* gain or loss; or it indeed seems to be a spirited[206] policy or a cowardly -- and if in the things that are placed before the people one sees gain, even if loss is concealed underneath, and if it seems spirited, even if the ruin of the republic is concealed underneath, it will always be easy to persuade the multitude of it, and thus always makes it difficult to persuade them of other policies that appear to be either cowardly or a loss, even if they have safety and gain concealed underneath.What I have said is confirmed with infinite examples, Roman and foreign, modern and ancient.For from this was born that bad opinion that arose in Rome of Fabius Maximus, who could not persuade the Roman people that it was useful for that Republic to proceed slowly in that war, and hold back the impetus of Hannibal without coming to blows, for the people judged this policy to be cowardly and did not see in it the advantages it had.Nor had Fabius enough reasons to demonstrate it to them.So blinded are peoples by bold opinions, that although the Roman People had made that error of giving to Fabius's Master of Horse authority to engage in battle, even when Fabius wished not to do so; and through that authority the Roman camp was at the point of defeat, if Fabius with his prudence had not remedied [the situation]. It did not suffice for them to have this experience, for afterwards Varro was made consul, not because of any of his other merits but only that he had in all the piazzas and all the public places of Rome promised to defeat Hannibal whenever he would be given authority.From that arose the battle and defeat of Cannae and almost the ruin of Rome.[207]

I wish to adduce on this point still another Roman example.When Marcus Centenius Penula came to the Senate,[208] a most vile man (nonetheless he had had some rank in the militia), Hannibal had been in Italy eight or ten years [and] he had filled the whole province with slaughtered Romans,and he offered that if he were given the authority of raising an army of volunteers wherever he wished in Italy, he would in a very short time give to them Hannibal captured or dead.To the Senate, the petition of this fellow seemed temerarious; nonetheless, thinking that if it were refused, and the people would afterwards know of his request, that there might arise some tumult, envy and hatred of rank against the senatorial order, they granted it to him, wishing to put in danger all those who followed him rather than to let arise

[206] *animoso*
[207] Livy, XXII 25-49.
[208] Livy, XXV 19.

new anger in the people, knowing how a similar policy had been accepted, and how difficult it would be to dissuade from it.That man then went with a confused and disordered multitude to find Hannibal, and no sooner did he join the encounter than he was with all those who followed him routed and killed.

In Greece, in the city of Athens, Nicias, a man most grave and most prudent, could not persuade that people that it would not be good to go and attack Sicily; such that taking the decision against the will of the wise, it resulted in the total ruin of Athens.Scipio, when he was made consul, desired the province of Africa, and promisingthe total ruin of Carthage, to which the Senate did not agree because Fabius Maximus had judged against it, he threatened to propose it to the People, since that man knew very well how such-like proposals are pleasing to the people.[209]

One could give of this point examples from our city, as when Messer Ercole Bentivogli, governor of the Florentine forces together with Antonio Giacomini, after having routed Bartolommeo d'Alviani at San Vincente, went to besiege Pisa; this enterprise was decided on by the people on the bold promises of Messere Ercole, although many wise citizens had censured it.Nonetheless, they had no remedy, impelled by that universal will, which was founded on the bold promises of the governor.I say then that there is not an easier way to bring ruin to a republic where the people have authority than to set them on bold enterprises; for wherever the people are of any moment, these are always accepted, nor will he who has another opinion have any remedy.But if from this arises the ruin of the city, from it also arises, and more often, the particular ruin of citizens who are put at the head of similar enterprises; for the people having presupposed victory, when loss comes to them, they do not accuse either fortune or the impotence of whoever has commanded, but his wickedness and ignorance, and most of the time they kill or imprison or banish him, as happened to infinite Carthaginian captains and many Athenians.Nor does some victory they have had in the past help them, for all is canceled by the present loss, as it happened to our Antonio Giacomini, who, not having taken Pisa by storm as the people had presupposed and as he promised, came into such popular disfavor that notwithstanding his past infinite good works, he lived more through the humanity of those who had authority than through any other cause that among the people might have defended him.

54.How much authority a grave man has to restrain an excited multitude.

[209] Livy, XXVIII 40—45.

The second notable [thing] about the text discussed in the previous chapter is that there is nothing that is so apt to restrain an excited multititude than reverence for some grave man of authority who confronts them.And not without cause Virgil says: "then if they see a man strong in his piety, gravity and merits, they are silent and stand by with attentive ears."[1]

Therefore he who is placed [at the head of] an army or he who finds himself in a city where tumult might arise ought to present himself with the greatest grace and with the most honors that he can, putting about him the insignias of the rank that he holds to make them have more reverence.A few years ago Florence was divided into two factions, the Frateschi and the Arrabiata, as they were called, and coming to arms the Frateschi were overcome, among whom was Pagolantonio Soderini, in those times a citizen of much repute, and the people going in these tumults armed to sack his house, Messere Francesco, his brother, then bishop of Volterra and now a cardinal, found himself by chance in the house, upon hearing the noise and seeing the disturbance, put on his back his most magnificent[2] garments, the episcopal rochet on top of them, and met those armed men and with his presence and his words stopped them; and this thing was noted and celebrated for many days by all the city.I conclude therefore that there is no more certain and no more necessary remedy to restrain an excited multitude than the presence of a man who by his presence appears and is reverend.One sees then, by returning to the previously discussed text, with what obstinacy the Roman plebs accepted the policy of going to Veii, because they judged it useful, nor did they recognize the harm that was underneath it; and how, with many tumults arising, there would arise scandals if the Senate, with men grave and full of reverence, had not checked their fury.

55.How easily things are conducted in that city wherethe multitude is not corrupt; and that where there is equality one is not able to make a principate, and where there is not, one is not able to make a republic.

Although what is to be feared or hoped for from corrupted cities was discussed at length above, nonetheless it does not seem to me outside of [my] purpose to consider a decision of the Senate with respect to the vow that Camillus had made to give the tenth part of the booty taken from the

[1] *Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem/Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant.* Aeneid, I 151-152.

[2] *onorevoli* -- lit., honorable, i.e., the garments showing most the dignities of his office.

Veientes to Apollo.[210]Since that booty had gone into the hands of the Roman Plebs, and since there was no other way of being able to check the accounts, the Senate issued an edict that everyone should give back in public a tenth part of what he had plundered.Although that decision was not put into effect, the Senate having afterwards taken another mode, and in another way satisfied Apollo to the satisfaction of the plebs, nonetheless, one sees by that decision how much the Senate had confidence in their goodness, and how it judged that no one would not give back exactly all that was commanded by the edict.On the other hand, one sees how the plebs did not think of defrauding the edict in any way by giving less than they ought, but of freeing themselves from it by openly showing their indignation.This example with many others that have been adduced above, show how much goodness and religion were in that people, and how much good was expected of them.And truly where there is not this goodness, one cannot hope for any good, as one cannot hope in those provinces that in our times are seen to be corrupt, as Italy is above all others, and France and Spain have their share too in this corruption.If in these provinces one does not see so many disorders arise as do arise every day in Italy, that derives not so much from the goodness of the peoples, who lack it in good measure, as from having a king who keeps them united, not only by his virtue but by the orders in those kingdoms that are as yet not wasted away.One sees this well in the province of Germany where goodness and this religion are still great in those peoples, that brings it about that many republics live there in liberty, and so observe their laws that no one from without nor from within dares to seize them.And that it is true that in them reigns a good part of that ancient goodness,I wish to give an example like that one given above of the Senate and the Roman plebs.These republics, whenever it happens that they have need of spending some quantity of money on public account, customarily have those magistrates or councils in authority place on all inhabitants of the city [a tax of] one per cent or two on what each one has of value.This decision being made according to the order of the town,[211] each one presents himself before the collectors of that tax, and first taking the oath to pay the appropriate sum, he throws into a designated chest what according to his conscience it seems to him he ought to pay -- of which payment no one is a witness except the one who pays.From which one may conjecture how much goodness and religion there still is in such men. It ought to be reckoned that each one pays the true sum, for if it would not be paid, that tax would not yield the quantity that they had planned for according to what customarily had been collected of old; and

[210] Livy, V 23-25.

[211] *l'ordine della terra* -- also, the order of the earth.

in its not so yielding the fraud would be known, and when known another mode than this would be taken. That goodness is the more to be admired in these times when it is rarer, and indeed one sees that it survives only in that province.

That arises from two things: the first that they hadnot had much intercourse[212] with neighbors -- for neither do the latter go to their homes, nor do they go to the homes of the others, for they had been content -- with whatever goods, to live with whatever food, to dress with whatever wool that came from the country.Whence was taken away all cause of any intercourse and the beginning of any corruption; for they did not have to pick up the customs of the French, or the Spanish, or the Italians: which nations are, taken all together, the corruption of the world.The other cause is that those republics where the political and uncorrupt life is maintained, do not permit that their citizens either are or live in the fashion of a gentleman, and thus maintain among themselves an even equality, and are most hostile to those lords and gentlemen who are in that province; and if by chance some of these fall into their hands, as the beginnings of corruption and the cause of every scandal they kill them.To clarify this name of gentlemen,as to what it is, I say that that those are called gentlemen who live abundantly in leisure from the revenue of their possessions, without having any care either for cultivation or other necessary labor to live.These are pernicious in any republic and any province; but most pernicious are those who besides the aforesaid fortune command castles and have subjects who obey them.Of these two kinds of men there are plenty in the Kingdom of Naples, the lands of Rome,[213] the Romagna and Lombardy. From whence it comes that in those provinces there has never arisen any republic nor any political life; for such kinds of men are wholly hostile to any civil life.[214]And to wish to introduce a republic into provinces of like mode would not be possible.But to wish to re-order them, if one was the arbiter, there would be no other way but to establish a kingdom there.The reason is this: where the matter is so corrupt that the laws are an insufficient check, together with them there is need to order with that greater force that is kingly rule, that with absolute and excessive power puts a check on that excessive ambition and corruption of the powerful.This reason can be verified with the example of Tuscany, where one sees that in a small space of ground there long have been three republics: Florence, Siena and Lucca; and the other cities of that province are

[212] conversazioni -- lit, conversations.
[213] *Terra di Roma* -- the lands or territory of Rome, i.e., the territory known as the Patrimony of St. Peter, and not the Papal States generally.
[214] *civilità*

servile in such a mode that one sees [that there is] a mind[215] and an order that either maintains or wishes to maintain their liberty.All this arises by there not being in that province any lords of the castle, and none or very few gentlemen; but there is such equality that a prudent man, and one who has knowledge of ancient civil order,[216] could easily introduce a civil life. But its misfortune has been so great that until these times it has not fallen upon any man that has been able or known how to do it.

One draws then from this discourse this conclusion: that he who wishes to establish a republic where there are many gentlemen, cannot do it if he first does not extinguish them all; and that he who wishes to establish a kingdom or a principate where there is great equality will never be able to do it if he does not remove from that equality many of an ambitious and unquiet mind,and of these make gentlemen in fact and not in name, giving them a castle and possessions, and giving them the favor of substances and men; placed in the midst of them he maintains his power by means of them, and he is the means of their ambition.The others would be constrained to bear that yoke that force, and nothing else, can make them bear.Since in this way there is a proportion between one who forces and one who is forced, men stand firm each in [their respective] orders.And since to make a province a republic from one fit for being a kingdom, and to make one fit for being a republic from one that is a kingdom, is matter for a man who for brain and for authority is rare, there are many who have wished to do it and few who have known how to conduct it.For the greatness of the thing in part frightens men and in part impedes them in such a way that they fail in their very beginnings.

I believe that my opinion, that where there are gentlemen it is not possible to order a republic, will seem contrary to the experience of the Venetian Republic, in which only those who were gentlemen could have any rank.To which the answer is that this example in no way opposes it, for the gentlemen in that republic were so more in name than in fact, for they did not have great incomes from possessions, since their great riches were based on merchandise and movable goods.Moreover, not one of them has a castle or any jurisdiction over men; instead, that name of gentleman is among them a name of dignity and of reputation, without being founded on any of those things that makes those in other cities be called gentlemen.As other republics have all their divisions under different names, Venice is thus divided into gentlemen and people; and they wish that the former have or can have all the honors, and that the others be excluded from all of them.This does not

[215] *animo*
[216] *civiltà*

make for any disorder in that land,[217] for the reasons mentioned at other times.Let him then constitute a republic where there is or is made a great equality, and on the contrary order a principate where there is great inequality; otherwise he will make a thing without proportion and little durable.

56.Before there follow great accidents in a city or in a province, signs come that prognosticate them or men who predict[218] them.

Whence it arises I do not know, but one sees, through ancient and modern examples, that never does any grave accident happen in a city or a province that has not been predicted either by divination, or revelations, or prodigies, or other heavenly signs.In order not to go far from home in proving this, everyone knows how much Fra Girolamo Savonarola had predicted[219] before the coming of King Charles VIII of France to Italy, and how, besides this, it was said that men-of-arms fighting each other in the air over Arezzo were heard and seen through all Tuscany.Everyone knows, besides this, how before the death of Lorenzo de' Medici the elder, the Duomo[220]was struck on its highest point by a heavenly bolt, very greatly ruining that edifice.Everyone also knows how a little before Piero Soderini, who had been made gonfalonier for life by the Florentine people, was driven out and deprived of his rank, that the palace was struck by a flash of lightning in the same way.One could besides this adduce more examples which, to avoid tedium, I shall omit.I shall narrate only that which Titus Livy says, before the coming of the French to Rome, which is how one Marcus Cedicius, a plebeian, reported to the Senate having heard at midnight, as he was passing through the Via Nuova, a voice greater than human, warning him that he should report to the magistrates that the French were coming to Rome.[221]The cause of this I believe is to be discussed and interpreted by a man who might have notice[4] of natural and supernatural things, which we do not have.Still, it could be that since the air, as some philosopher would have it, is full of intelligences which by their natural virtues foresee future things, and having compassion for men they warn them with suchlike signs so that they could prepare defenses.Still, however it might be, one sees the truth to

---

[217] *terra* -- or, town.
[218] *predicano* -- also, preached or proclaim.
[219] *predican*o – also, preached.
[220] The Cathedral of Florence.
[221] Livy, V 32.
[4] *notizia* -- also, news.

be thus; and that always after such accidents there supervene extraordinary and new things in the provinces.

57.The plebs together is bold, by itself is weak.

When the ruin of their fatherland followed the passage of the Franks, there were many Romans who went to live in Veii, against the constitution and order of the Senate; to remedy this disorder [the Senate] commanded through its public edicts that each one within a certain time and under a certain penalty should return to live in Rome.At first, those against whom the edicts were directed made mock of them; afterwards, when the time approached to obey them, all obeyed.And Titus Livy says these words: "From being brave as a whole, the fear of each separate one made them obedient."[222] And truly one cannot show better the nature of a multitude in this part than is demonstrated in this text.For the multitude is often audacious in speaking against the deliberations of their prince; afterwards, when they look the penalty in the face, not trusting each other, they run to obey.Thus one sees as certain that one ought to take little account of what a people say about its [being] well or ill disposed, when you are ordered in such a way as to be able to maintain [that order] if it is well disposed, and, if it is ill disposed, can provide that it does not harm you.This is to be understood of those ill dispositions that peoples have that arise from some cause other than having either lost liberty or their prince who had been loved by them and is as yet living; for the ill dispositions that arise from these causes are formidable above everything else, and have need of great remedies to check them; the other indispositions are easily handled when it has no captains to whom to turn.For, on the one hand, there is nothing more formidable than a multitude unshackled and without a head, and on the other hand there is nothing weaker.For even though it might have arms in hand, it is easy to reduce it, provided that you are at a minimum able to escape the first onset, for when the minds[223] have cooled a little, and each sees the other returning to his home, they begin to doubt themselves and think of their safety either through flight or by coming to an accord.Therefore a multitude thus excited, wishing to escape these dangers, have quickly to make among themselves a head who corrects them, keeping them united and thinking of their defense: as did the Roman plebs when, after the death of Virginia, they left Rome, and to save themselves made among them twenty Tribunes;[224] and if this is

[222] *Ex ferocibus universis singuli metu suo obedientes fuere*. Livy, VI 4.
[223] *animi*
[224] Livy, III 50-51.

not done, what Titus Livy says in the words written above will always come to pass: that all together they are bold, but when each one then begins to think of his own danger he becomes vile and weak.

58.The multitude is wiser and more constant than a prince.

There is nothing more unavailing[225] and more inconstant than the multitude, thus our Titus Livy, and so all other historians affirm.For it often occurs, in the narration of the actions of men, that one sees the multitude having condemned someone to death, and then afterwards have wept for that same one and highly desired him -- as one sees the Roman people did with Manlius Capitolinus, who having been condemned to death, he was afterwards highly desired.The words of our author are these: "The people in a short time, after there no longer was danger from him, had a desire for him."[226]Elsewhere, when he shows the accidents that arose in Syracuse after the death of Hieronymus, nephew of Hiero, he says: "This is the nature of the multitude; either it serves humbly, or rules proudly."[227]I do not know if I shall take up a province harsh and so full of difficulties that I must needs either abandon it with shame or laboriously go on with it,[228]in wishing to defend a thing, that, as I have said, all the writers have accused.But, however this may be, I do not judge nor will I ever judge it to be a defect to defend any opinion with reasons, without wishing to use authority or force.I say then that the defect of which the writers accuse the multitude, that all human beings may be so accused of it individually, and especially princes, for everyone who is not regulated by the laws would makes these same errors as the unshackled multitude.One can know this easily, for there are and have been many princes and good and wise ones have been few.I speak of princes that have been able to break the bridle that can correct them: among whom are not those kings who were born in Egypt, when in the most ancient antiquity that province was governed with laws, nor those who were born in Sparta, nor those who in our times are born in France, which kingdom is moderated more by laws than any other kingdom of which we have notice in our times.And these kings who are born under such constitutions are not to be placed in that number.Hence one would have to consider the nature of each man in himself and to see if he is like unto the multitude, for the comparison should be with a multitude similarly regulated by laws as these were, and one will find in it that same goodness that we see in the [kings],

[225] *vana* -- lit., vain, i.e. worthless or useless.
[226] *Populum brevi, posteaquam ab eo periculum nullum erat, desiderium eius tenuit.* Livy, VI 20.
[227] *Haec natura moltitudinis est: aut humiliter servit, aut superbe dominatur.* Livy, XXIV 25.
[228] *seguirla con carico* -- also, laboriously to oversee or supervise.

and we would see that they neither proudly ruled nor humbly served, as did the Roman people who, while the Republic lasted incorrupt, did not ever serve humbly or rule proudly, but rather with its orders and magistrates held its rank honorably.When it was necessary to move against one who was powerful, they did, as one saw in Manlius, in the Ten and in others who sought to oppress [the people]; and when it was necessary to obey the Dictator and the Consuls for the public safety, they did so.If the Roman people desired Manlius Capitolinus [when he was] dead, it is not marvellous; for they desired his virtues, which were such that the memory of them aroused compassion in anyone and would have had the force to bring about the same effect in a prince; for it is the judgment of all the writers, that virtue is praised and admired even in one's enemies.If Manlius, from so much desire had been resuscitated, the people of Rome would have given of him the same judgment it had made: having drawn him from prison, a little afterwards it condemned him to death.For all this, one might see princes taken to be wise who have killed some person, and afterwards highly desired him, such as Alexander [with] Cleitus and others of his friends, and Herod with Marianne.But what our historian says of the nature of the multitude, he does not say of that which is regulated by the laws, as was the Roman, but of the unshackled, as was the Syracusan, which made those errors that infuriated and unshackled men make, as did Alexander the Great and Herod in the cases mentioned.Therefore the nature of the multitude is no more to be inculpated than that of princes, for all equally err when without any respect all are able to err.Of this, besides what I have said, there are many examples both among the Roman emperors and among other tyrants and princes, where one sees such inconstancy and variation in life as one never would find in any multitude.

I conclude then against common opinion, that says that peoples, when they are princes, are variable, mutable and ungrateful, affirming that these sins in them are not other than they are in individual princes.And someone accusing the peoples and princes together could be saying the truth;but in excepting princes he deceives himself, because a people that commands and is well-ordered will be stable, prudent and grateful not otherwise than a prince, or better than a prince though he be thought wise.On the other hand, a prince unshackled from the laws will be more ungrateful, variable and imprudent than a people.The difference in their manner of action does not arise from a diverse nature -- for it is in one mode in all, and if there is advantage in good it is in the people -- but from having more or less respect for the laws within which both live.He who will consider the Roman people will see that it had been for four hundred years an enemy to the name "king,"

and a lover of glory and the common good of its fatherland.One will see many examples habitually done by it that witness to both things.If anyone would allege to me the ingratitude that it showed against Scipio, I respond with what was discussed at length above on this matter, where it is shown that peoples are less ungrateful than princes.[229]But as to prudence and stability, I say that a people is more prudent, more stable, and of better judgment than a prince.And not without cause is the voice of the people likened to that of God, for one sees a universal opinion being marvelously effective in its prognostications, so that it seems that by an occult virtue it foresees its bad and its good.As for judging things, when they hear two haranguers who incline to different policies, one very rarely sees them not take the better opinion, and not be capable of that truth that they hear.If in those bold things or those that appear to be useful, as is said above, they err, a prince also errs many times [with] his own passions, which are many more than those of peoples.One also sees in the elections of magistrates that they make a far better election than a prince, nor will a people be ever persuaded that it is good to raise to dignities a man ill-famed and of corrupt habits, of which one persuades a prince easily and by a thousand ways.One sees a people begin to have a thing in horror, and be of that opinion for many centuries, which one does not see in a prince.Of both these two things, I wish the witness of the Roman people to suffice for me who, in so many hundreds of years, in so many elections of Consuls and Tribunes, did not make four elections of which they had to repent.They held in such hatred, as I have said, the name of king that no obligation to any of its citizens that attempted that name could let him escape the deserved punishments.One sees, besides this, that the cities where the people are princes make in a very short time very great additions and many greater than those who have always been under a prince; as Rome did after the expulsion of the kings, and Athens after it was freed from Pisistratus.That cannot arise from anything other than that governments of peoples are better than those of princes.Nor do I mind[230] that this my opinion be opposed by all that is said by our historian in the aforesaid text, and in whatever other; for if all the disorders of peoples were discoursed [upon] and all the disorders of princes, all the glories of peoples and all those of princes, one will see the people far superior in goodness and glory.And if princes are superior to peoples in the ordering of laws, forming civil lives, ordering statutes and new orders, the peoples are so superior in maintaining ordained things that they share without doubt in the glory of those who ordered them.

---

[229] I 29, above.

[230] *voglio* – lit., wish.

In sum, in order to conclude this matter, I say: as much as the states of princes have lasted, so much have the states of republics, and both have had need of being regulated by laws.For a prince who can do what he wishes is mad; a people that can do what it wishes is not wise.If then one will reason of a prince obligated by laws and of a people enchained with them, one will see more virtue in the people than in the prince; if one will reason of both unshackled, one will see fewer errors in the people than in the prince, they will be minor and there will be greater remedies.For it can be, from a good man having spoken to a licentious and turbulent people, that it can easily be returned into the good way; there is no one who is able to speak to a wicked prince, nor is there other remedy than steel.From this one is able to make a conjecture of the importance of the malady in one and the other: that to cure the malady in the people words suffice, which in the prince needs steel -- there will be no one who will not judge that where there is greater need to cure there will be the greater errors.When a people is completely unshackled, the madnesses that they do are not to be feared; nor does one fear present evil but what can arise, since a tyranny might arise from so much confusion.But with wicked princes the opposite happens; one fears present evil and it is for the future one hopes, since men persuade themselves that out of his wicked life might arise a free one. So you see the difference between the one and the other, which is that between things that are and those that have to be.The cruelties of the multitude are against whomever they fear might seize the common good; those of a prince are against whomever he fears might seize [his] own good.But the opinion against the peoples arises because everyone can say evil of peoples without fear and freely even while they rule; of princes one always speaks with a thousand fears and a thousand respects.Nor does it seem to me outside my purpose, for this matter draws me on, to dispute in the following chapter on which other confederations one can have more faith in, those made with a republic or those made with a prince.

BOOK TWO

Preface

Men always praise ancient times, but not always reasonably, and accuse the present, and are partisans of things past in such a mode that they not only celebrate those ages known through the memory that the writers have left of them, but even that which, having become old, they remember as having seen in their youth.When this opinion of theirs is false, as more times it is, I am persuaded that the causes vary that lead them to this deception.The first I believe to be that of not understanding the whole truth about ancient things, and that these [writers] often conceal the things that would have brought infamy in those times; and the other things that could give birth to their glory were rendered magnificently and most fulsomely.For the majority of writers obey the fortune of victors in such a mode that in order to make their victories glorious, they illustrate in such a mode not only what by them has been virtuously managed but even the actions of enemies, that whoever is born afterwards in whichever of these two provinces, either in the victorious or the conquered, has a cause for marveling at those men and those times and is forced to praise and love them most highly.Besides this, since men hate things either from timorousness or envy, there come to be extinguished two very powerful causes of hatred of things past, since these are not able to harm you and give you no cause to envy them.But as to those things that are being managed or seen, the contrary happens, and the knowledge of these is entire and is not in any part hidden from you; and since you know that there is in them together with the good many other things that displease you, you are forced to judge them as inferior to ancient things, even though in truth present things would merit glory and fame much more than they: reasoning not of the things pertinent to the arts, that have such clarity in themselves that the times have not been able to take away or to give little more glory than they in themselves have merited, but speaking of those things pertinent to the life and customs of men, of which one does not see such clear testimonies.

I reply then that it is true that there is that custom of praising and blaming written above, but it is not then always true that they err in doing so.For sometimes it is necessary that they judge the truth for, since human things are always in motion, these either ascend or descend.One might see a city or a province that has been ordered to the political life by some excellent man and, for a time, by virtue of that orderer, going on always growing towards the best.He who is born at that time in such a state and praises ancient times more than modern, he deceives himself; and his deception is

caused by those things that have been said above.But those who are born afterwards in that city or province, for whom the time has come in which it descends towards the part which is for the worse, then they are not deceived.In thinking of how these things proceed, I judge the world always to have been in one and the same mode, and to have had in it as much good as bad; but this bad and this good vary from province to province, as one sees by what is known of those ancient kingdoms that varied from each other because of the variations in customs, but the world has stayed the same.There has only been this difference -- that where it first lodged its virtue in Assyria, it was thence placed in Media, afterwards in Persia, and so it came from there to Italy and to Rome.And if after the Roman Empire there has not succeeded an Empire that has endured or where the world has kept together its virtue, one sees nonetheless that it was scattered in many nations where they lived virtuously; such as the kingdom of the Franks, the kingdom of the Turks, that of the Sultan, and every one of the peoples of Germany, and earlier in that Saracen sect that has done such great things and seized [so] much [of the] world after the destruction of the Eastern Roman Empire.In all these provinces, then, after the Romans were ruined, and in all these sects, there was this virtue that is desired, and still is in some parts of these, and with true praise is praised. He who is born in these and praises times past more than the present could be deceived; but he who is born in Italy and in Greece and has not become either an ultramontane in Italy or a Turk in Greece, has reason to blame his times and praise others; for in former times there are many things that were wonderfully done, in these latter times there is nothing to redeem them from every extreme misery, infamy, and shame, where there is no observance of religion, of laws, of military [things], but they are stained with every reason of filth.And so much the more are these vices detestable the more these are in those who sit on tribunals, command everyone, and wish to be adored.

But returning to our reasoning, I say that if the judgment of men is corrupted, in judging as to which might be better either the present age or the ancient, in those things which by antiquity one cannot have as perfect knowledge as one has of one's own times, it ought not be corrupted when the old are judging the times of youth in their old age; having equally known and seen the former and the latter.Such a thing might be true if men through all the times of their life would have the same judgment and have the same appetites.But since these vary, even if the times do not vary, it cannot be that things appear in the same way to men -- having other appetites. other delights, other considerations in old age than in youth.For since men, when they become old lack force and grow in judgment and prudence, it is

necessary that those that in youth appeared to them bearable and good turn into the insupportable and wicked, and where they ought to have accused their judgment, they accuse the times.Besides this, human appetites being insatiable, for, having by nature the power and will to desire everything, and by fortune the power of obtaining but little, there continually results an ill contentedness in human minds; and a disgust with things that are possessed that blames the present times, praises the past and desires the future, though in doing this they are not moved by any reasonable cause.

I do not know then whether I will merit to be numbered among those who deceive themselves, if in these my discourses I will praise the times of the ancient Romans too much and blame that of ours.And truly if the virtue that then reigned and the vice that now reigns had not been clearer than the sun, I would have been more restrained in speech, doubting that I might bring on myself that deception of which I accuse others.But since it is a thing so manifest that everyone sees it, I shall be sospirited[231] as manifestly to say what I shall understand of those times and these, so that the minds[2] of young men who will read these writings of mine could flee from these and prepare themselves to imitate those, whenever fortune would give them the occasion. For it is the office of a good man that he teach to others that good that you were not able to work because of the malignity of the times and fortune, so that when many are capable, some of them more loved by Heaven might be able to work it.And having spoken in the discourses of the book above of the deliberations made by the Romans pertinent to the internal [affairs] of the city, in this we shall speak of those that the Roman People made pertinent to the increase of its imperium.

1.What was more the cause of the empire the Romans acquired, virtue or fortune?

Many have had the opinion, and among these Plutarch, a most grave writer, that the Roman people in acquiring the imperium was more the favorite of fortune than of virtue.[232]Among the other reasons that he adduces, he says that by that people's confession it is demonstrated that all the victories were acknowledged to be by fortune; they having built more temples to Fortune than to any other god.It seems that Livy joins himself to this opinion, for he rarely gives any Roman a speech in which he tells of virtue, to which he does not conjoin fortune.I do not wish to confess this in any

[231] *animoso*
[2] *animi*
[232] Plutarch, *Moralia,*IV, *De fortuna Romanorum*, 316B ff.

mode, nor do I even believe it possible to sustain.For if one finds no republic ever to have made more profits than Rome, that is because one finds no republic ever to have been ordained to be able to acquire as Rome was.For the virtue of the armies made her acquire imperium: and the order of proceeding and her own mode was discovered by her first giver of laws,[233] which enabled her to maintain what was acquired, as will be narrated at large below in many discourses. These say that two very powerful wars never having come at one time was [by] fortune and not the virtue of the Roman people; for they did not have a war with the Latins until the Samnites not only had been beaten, but the Romans had to make war in defense of them.They did not fight with the Tuscans until they had first subjugated the Latins, and the Samnites were almost wholly exhausted with frequent defeats.If two of these [in their] full power had, while they were fresh, come together, without doubt one can easily conjecture that there would have followed the ruin of the Roman Republic.But however this thing arose, it never occurred that they had two very powerful wars at the same time; on the contrary, it always seemed that either when one arose the other would be extinguished, or when one was being extinguished the other would arise.One can easily see this from the order of the wars made by them; for leaving aside those that they made before Rome was taken by the French, one sees that when they fought with the Aequi and with the Volscians, that never while these peoples were powerful did other nations descend upon them.With these subdued, the war against the Samnites arose, and although before this war was finished the Latin peoples had rebelled against the Romans, nonetheless when that rebellion followed, the Samnites were in league with Rome, and with their army helped the Romans to subdue Latin insolence.These being subdued, the war with Samnium revived.The Samnites were beaten by many defeats given to their forces and the war with the Tuscans arose -- which, on being composed, the Samnites rose up anew with the passage of Pyrrhus into Italy.When he was repulsed and sent back to Greece, they started the first war with the Carthaginians.No sooner was that war finished when all the French, from this and from the other side of the Alps, conspired against the Romans; so that between Popolania and Pisa, where the tower of San Vicenzo is today, they were with the greatest slaughter overcome.That war ended, for the space of twenty years there were wars of not much importance, for they did not fight with any others except with the Ligurians and that remnant of the French who were in Lombardy.Thus they stood until the second Carthaginian war arose, which occupied Italy for sixteen years.When this ended with the greatest glory, the

[233] *latore di leggi*

Macedonian war arose; when ended, then came that with Antiochus and with Asia.After that victory there was not in the whole world either prince or republic which by itself or all together could have opposed the Roman forces.

But before that ultimate victory, he who will consider well the order of these wars and the mode of their proceedings, will see in them mixed with fortune a very great virtue and prudence.Thus he who might examine the cause of such fortune would discover that easily; for it is a most certain thing that as a prince and a people come into such reputation that every neighboring prince and people is afraid to attack him alone and fears him, it will always occur that none of these ever will attack him unless necessitated [to do so]: in such a mode that it will be as it were almost in the choice of that powerful [one] to make war with whichever of his neighbors he pleases, and with his industry to quiet the others.And they, partly respecting his power, partly deceived by the modes that he will take to put them to sleep, are easily quieted. The other powers that are distant, and have commerce with him, treat this as a remote thing that does not appertain to them.They stand in this error until this fire comes close to them, and when it comes they have no remedy to extinguish it except their own forces, which then are not enough, since he has become most powerful.I wish to omit how the Samnites stood by watching the Roman People conquer the Volscians and the Aequi.Not to be too prolix I shall turn to the Carthaginians, who were of great power and of great reputation when the Romans fought with the Samnites and the Tuscans: for they held all of Africa, held Sardinia and Sicily, had dominion in part of Spain.That power of theirs, together with being far from the confines of the Roman People, made it such that they never thought of attacking [the Roman people], nor to come to the aid of the Samnites and the Tuscans; on the contrary they did as one does [with respect to those whose] affairs[234] are increasing rather in their favor, associating with them and seeking their friendship.Nor did they see the error made at the outset until the Romans, with all the peoples between them and the Carthaginians subdued, began to fight with them for the imperium of Sicily and Spain.The same occurred to the French as to the Carthaginians, and also to Philip, king of the Macedonians, and to Antiochus, and each of them believed, while the Roman people were occupied with the other, that the other would surpass [the Roman people], and that there would be time either with peace or war to defend himself from them. In such a mode I believe that the fortune the Romans had in this part, all those princes would

[3] *cose*

have had who proceeded as the Romans did, and they would have been of the same virtue as they.

Here one might on this point show the mode taken by the Roman people in entering into the provinces of others, if we had not in our treatise on Principates spoken at length on it,[235] for there this matter is disputed at large. I shall only touch on this lightly, how they always contrived to have in new provinces some friend to be a ladder or door by which to climb or enter or as a means to hold it, as one sees that by means of the Capuans they entered Samnium, of the Camertines into Tuscany, of the Mamertines into Sicily, of the Saguntines into Spain, of Massinissa into Africa, of the Aetolians into Greece, of Eumenes and other princes into Asia, of the Massilians and the Aedui into France.Thus they never lacked similar adherents in order to facilitate their enterprises, both in acquiring provinces and in holding them.Those peoples who observe these seem to have less need of fortune than those who do not observe them well.And in order that everyone might better know how much more their virtue could do than their fortune in acquiring that imperium, we shall discuss in the following chapter of what qualities those peoples were and with whom [the Roman people] had to fight, and how obstinate they were in defending their liberty.

2.With what peoples the Romans had to fight, and how obstinately they defended their liberty.

Nothing made it more toilsome for the Romans to overcome the people around them and part of the distant provinces, than the love of liberty that many peoples had in those times, which was so obstinately defended that never except by an excessive virtue would they have been subjugated.For one knows by many examples into what dangers they entered to maintain or recover that [liberty], what vengeance they took against those who had occupied them.It is also known in the reading of histories what injuries peoples and cities receive from servitude.Where in these times there is only one province which might be said to have in it free cities, in ancient times in all the provinces there were many very free peoples.One sees how in those times in Italy, of which we are at present speaking, from the Alps[236] that now divide Tuscany from Lombardy, up to the toe of Italy, were all free peoples as were the Tuscans, the Romans, the Samnites, and many other peoples

[4] *Prince*, III.

[236] *Alpi* — the Appenines.

who inhabited the rest of Italy.Nor is it ever argued[237] that there was any king there, except those who reigned in Rome, and Porsenna, king of Tuscany[238] -- and history does not say how his stock was extinguished.But one sees well how in the times the Romans went to besiege Veii that Tuscany was free -- and so enjoyed its liberty and so hated the name of prince, that the Veientes having made a king in Veii for their defense, and asking the Tuscans for aid against the Romans, they, after many consultations had been held, decided not to give aid to the Veientes as long as they lived under a king; judging that it was not good to defend the fatherland of those who had already placed it under another.[239] It is an easy thing to recognize whence this affection for a free life arises in peoples; for one sees by experience cities never having expanded either in dominion or in riches except while they have been free.And it is truly a marvelous thing to consider to what greatness Athens came in the space of one hundred years, after she freed herself from the tyranny of Pisistratus.But above all it is most marvelous to consider to what greatness Rome came after she freed herself from her kings.The reason is easy to understand, for it is not private good but the common good that makes cities great.And without doubt this common good is not observed except in republics, for all that is done to this purpose is executed: and whenever this turns to the harm of this or that private [man], there are so many of those who are by the aforesaid benefited, that they are able to push it forward against the disposition of those few who would be oppressed by it.The contrary occurs when there is a prince, where more often what he does harms the city, and what the city does harms him.Such that as soon as a tyranny arises, overcoming a free life, the least evil that results in these cities is that they go no further forward, and increase no more in power or in riches; but more often or rather always it occurs that they turn backwards.If chance makes it such that there arises a virtuous tyrant, who through spiritedness[240] and virtue of arms increases his dominion, no advantage would result to that republic but only to himself;for he cannot honor any of those citizens whom he tyrannizes who are valiant and good, since he wishes not to have to be suspicious of them.Nor can he yet bring the cities that he acquired into submission or make them tributaries of that city of which he is the tyrant, for to make it powerful is not to make him so, but for him to be so is to keep the state disunited and that each town and each province recognize him.Thus his acquisitions profit only him and not his fatherland.And he who might wish to confirm this opinion with infinite

[237] *ragionai* – lit., reasoned.
[238] Livy, II 9-14.
[239] Livy, V I.
[240] *animo*

other reasons, should read Xenophon in the treatise he made *On Tyranny*.It is not a marvel then that ancient peoples persecuted tyrants with such hatred and loved the free life, and that the name of liberty was so esteemed by them: as it came about when Hieronymus, the nephew of Hiero the Syracusan, was killed in Syracuse.When the news of his death came to his army which was not far from Syracuse, it began first to riot and take arms against his killers; but when it heard that in Syracuse the cry was for liberty, allured by that name all were quietened, it now put aside the anger against the tyrannicides and thought of how one could order in that city a free life.[241]Nor is it also a marvel that peoples take extraordinary [kinds of] vengeance against those who have taken away liberty.Of this there have been many examples, of which I intend to refer only to one which happened in Corcyra, a city of Greece, at the time of the Peloponnesian War.[242]Since that province was divided into two parties, one of which followed the Athenians and the other the Spartans, it arose that many cities were divided between the two; one party seeking friendship with Sparta, the other with Athens.And when it happened in that said city that the nobles prevailed and had taken away the liberty of the people, the popular [party] by means of the Athenians regained its forces, and laying its hands on the whole of the nobility shut them up in a prison able to hold them all.From this they were taken out eight or ten at a time, under the pretext of sending them into exile into diverse places, and they were killed with many examples of cruelty.Those who remained, having been warned of this, deliberated how it was possible to escape that ignominious death, and having armed themselves with what they could, fought with those who tried to enter, defending the entrance of the prison in such a mode that the people at the noise came in a rush, uncovered the upper part of the place, and suffocated them in the ruins.There then followed in that said province many other similar cases horrendous and notable; such that one sees it to be true that a liberty that has been taken away from you is avenged with greater impetus than [the liberty] which one wishes to take away from you.

Thinking then whence it could arise that in those ancient times the peoples were greater lovers of liberty than in these, I believe it arose from that same cause that now makes men less strong, which I believe to be the difference in our education from that of the ancient, founded on the difference of our religion from that of the ancient.For our religion having shown us the truth and the true way, makes us esteem less the honor of the world.Whence the Gentiles, esteeming it much, and having placed that as the

[241] Livy, XXIV 7, 21-22.
[242] Thucydides, III 70-85; IV 46-48.

highest good, were more ferocious in their actions.One can consider this in many of their constitutions, beginning with the magnificence of their sacrifices and the humility of ours, where there is some pomp, more delicate than magnificent, but without ferocious or vigorous actions.They lacked neither pomp nor magnificence in ceremonies, but conjoined with these the action of sacrifice full of blood and ferocity, killing multitudes of animals -- which aspect being terrible, made men similar to it.The ancient religion, besides this, did not beatify anyone but men full of worldly glory; such as were captains of armies and princes of republics.Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative men more than the active. It has then placed the highest good in humility, abasement, and in the disparagement of human things; the other placed it in greatness of spirit, in the strength of the body and in all those things that are fitted to make men most strong.And if our religion asks that you have strength in you, it wants that you be apt more to suffer than to do a forceful thing.This mode of life, then, seems to have rendered the world weak, and given it as a prey to wicked men who have been able securely to manipulate it, seeing how the universality in order to go to Paradise think more of enduring their beatings than of avenging them.And although it appears that the world is effeminate and Heaven disarmed, this arises without doubt more from the vileness of men, who have interpreted our religion according to indolence and not according to virtue.For if they would consider how it permits the exaltation and defense of the fatherland, they would see how it wishes that we love and honor it, and that we should prepare ourselves to be such that we might be able to defend it.These [kinds of] education and such false interpretations have thus made it such that in the world one does not see such republics as those one saw in ancient times, nor consequently does one see peoples as in love with liberty now as then.Yet I believe the cause of this to be rather that the Roman Empire with its arms and its greatness extinguished all the republics and all civil lives.[243] Although the Empire was then dissolved, the cities have not yet been able to pull themselves together or reorder [themselves] into a civil life, except in a very few places in that Empire.At any rate, however this may be, the Romans in every smallest part of the world found a confederation[244] of republics armed to the highest degree and extremely obstinate in the defense of their liberty.That shows that the Roman People, without a rare and extreme virtue, never would been able to overcome them.

To give an example of some member [of this confederation], I wish the example of the Samnites to suffice; and it seems to be a miraculous thing,

[243] *viveri civili* -- lit., all civil or political lives.
[244] *una congiura* — also, a conspiracy.

and Titus Livy confesses it, that they had been so powerful, and their arms so fit, that they were able, until the time of the Consul Papirius Cursor, son of the first Papirius, to resist the Romans for a space of forty-six years, after so many defeats, destruction of towns, and so much slaughter received in their country.[245]One now especially sees that country where there were so many citizens and so many men to be almost uninhabited, and yet at that time there was such order and such force that it would have been unconquerable, had it not been attacked by a Roman virtue.It is an easy thing to consider whence arose that order and from whence has proceeded this disorder, for all comes from living a free life then and living in servitude now.For all the towns and provinces that lived free in every part, as was said above, make the greatest of profits.For one sees larger [numbers of] peoples there, through marriages being freer and more desirable to men; for each procreates voluntarily those children that he believes he can feed, not doubting that his patrimony might be taken from him, and he knows that not only are they born free and not slaves but that they can through their virtue become princes.They see riches multiply in greater number, and that these come from agriculture and the arts.For each voluntarily multiplies such a thing [as riches] and seeks to acquire those goods that he believes he is able to enjoy when acquired.Whence it arises that men in competition think of private and public advantages, and both marvelously increase.The contrary of all these things follows in those countries that live in servitude, and the greater the lack of the usual good the harder is the servitude.Of all the hard [forms of] servitude that which is hardest submits you to a republic.First because it is more durable and one cannot hope to escape it; the other because the end of the republic is to enervate and weaken all other bodies in order to increase its own body.That is not done by a prince who subjects you, if that prince is not some barbarian prince, a destroyer of countries and waster of all the civilizations of men, as are the Oriental princes.But if he has in himself human and ordinary orders, he will most often love equally the cities subject to him and leaves them all the arts and almost all their ancient orders, so that if they cannot increase as free, they are not also ruined as slaves.I understand servitude to be what befalls cities in serving a foreigner, for of those who [serve] one of their citizens I have spoken of above.He who will consider then all what has been said will not marvel of the power that the Samnites had in being free, and of the weakness into which they came after coming into servitude.And Titus Livy gives assurance of it[246] in many places, and especially in the war against Hannibal, where he shows that when the

[245] Livy, X, 31, 38-42.

[246] *ne fa fed*e — lit., gives faith of it.

Samnites were oppressed by a legion of men which was in Nola, they sent ambassadors to Hannibal to beg him to succour them.These said in their parley that they had for a hundred years fought with the Romans with their own soldiers and their own captains, and they had many times resisted two consular armies and two consuls, and that after having come into such baseness they were scarcely able to defend themselves against one little Roman legion which was in Nola.[247]

3.Rome became a great city by destroying the surrounding cities and by receiving foreigners easily to its honors.

"Meanwhile Rome grows from the ruin of Alba."[248] Those who plan to make a city a great empire, ought with every industry devise that it be full of inhabitants, for without that abundance of men, never will one succeed in making a city great. This is done in two modes, one through love and one through force.Through love, keeping the ways open and safe for foreigners who plan to come to live in that [city], such that everyone lives there willingly.Through force, destroying the neighboring cities, and sending their inhabitants to live in your city.This was so observed by Rome that in the time of the sixth king[249] Rome was inhabited by eighty thousand men bearing arms.For the Romans wished to follow the custom of the good cultivator, who, in order that a plant might grow and produce and ripen its fruits, cuts off the first branches it puts out, so that, with that virtue remaining in the base of the plant, these can in time grow out greener and more fruitful.And that this mode, taken to increase and establish empire, was necessary and good is demonstrated by the example of Sparta and Athens, which were two republics armed to the highest degree and ordered by the best laws, nonetheless they did not conduct themselves to the greatness of the Roman Empire -- and Rome seemed to be more tumultuous and not as well ordered as they were.Of this one cannot adduce a reason other than the one previously alleged, for Rome having fattened the body of her city by these two ways, she could put into arms two hundred thousand men, and Sparta and Athens could never go beyond twenty thousand each. This did not arise from the site of Rome being more favorable than that of the others, but only from the diverse modes of procedure.For Lycurgus, founder of the Spartan republic, considering that nothing could more easily dissolve his laws than the mixture of new inhabitants, did everything so that foreigners would not

[247] Livy, XXIII 41-42.
[248] *Crescit interea Roma Albae ruinis.* Livy, I 30.
[2] Servius Tullius: reigned 578-534 B.C. See Livy, I 44.

have intercourse with it.Besides not receiving them in matrimony, in [things of] civilization and other intercourse fitted to bring men together, he ordered that in his republic they would spend money of leather, in order to take away from everyone the desire to come there to bring merchandise or bring any arts -- in such quality, that the city could never increase its inhabitants.And because all our actions imitate nature, it is not natural or possible that a slender stock should support a big branch. Therefore a small republic cannot seize cities or kingdoms that are stronger or greater than it; but if it yet seizes them, it will happen as it does to that tree that has a branch greater than the base: bearing it with difficulty, every least wind breaks it, as one sees happened to Sparta -- which, having seized all the cities of Greece, as soon as Thebes rebelled then all the other cities rebelled, and there remained the trunk alone without branches.That did not happen to Rome, since her base[250] was so big that she could support any branch whatsoever.This mode of procedure then, together with the other that will be said below, made Rome great and extremely powerful.This Titus Livy demonstrates in a few words, when he says: "Meanwhile Rome grows from the ruin of Alba."

4.Republics have taken three modes with respect to expansion.

He who has observed ancient histories finds that republics have taken three modes with respect to expansion.The first is what the ancient Tuscans observed, that being a league put together of several republics, where none would be placed before the other either in authority or in rank: and to make the other cities companions in acquiring, and in a similar way as the Swiss do at this time and as in ancient times the Achaeans and Aetolians did in Greece.And because the Romans made many wars against the Tuscans, I shall expand in giving an account of them in detail in order to show better the quality of this first mode.In Italy, prior to the Roman Empire, the Tuscans were most powerful on sea and land: and although there is no detailed history of their affairs, still there is some little memory and some sign of their greatness; and it is known that they sent a colony to the *mare superum*,[251] which they called Adria, which was so noble that they gave the name to the sea that the Latins still call the Adriatic.[252]It is also known that their arms exacted obedience from the Tiber up to the foot of the Alps that now encircle the greater part of Italy, notwithstanding that two hundred years before the Romans grew in such forces, the said Tuscans lost the imperium

[250] *il pie* -- lit., foot.
[251] The *mare superum* or upper sea was the Adriatic Sea, the *mare inferum* the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the *mare internum* the Mediterranean.
[252] Livy, V 33-35.

over the country that is today called Lombardy, which province was occupied by the French who were moved, either from necessity or from the sweetness of the fruits and especially the wine, to enter into Italy under Bellovesus, their leader.Having defeated and driven out the provincials, they settled in that place where they built many cities and called that province Gallia from the name they then bore, which they held until the Romans mastered them.The Tuscans then lived with that equality and proceeded in [their] expansion in that first mode that was said above: and there were twelve cities, among which was Chiusi, Veii, Arezzo, Fiesole, Volterra, and the like, that by way of the league governed their empire;[253] nor could they, in their acquiring, go outside of Italy, and the greater part of [Italy] still remained intact for causes that will be said below.The other mode is to make companions, but not such that you do not therefore remain with the office of command, the seat of the Empire, and the credit of the enterprises – that mode was observed by the Romans.The third mode is to make them immediate subjects and not companions, as did the Spartans and the Athenians.Of these three modes this last is wholly useless, as one sees in what was written above of these two republics, who were ruined by nothing other than having acquired that dominion that they could not hold.For to take the responsibility of having to govern cities with violence, especially those who were used to living free, is a difficult and laborious thing.If you are not armed, and great in arms, you can neither command nor rule them.If you wish to to do so, it is necessary to make companions to help you, and to increase the population of your city.And because these two cities did neither the one or the other, the mode of their procedure was useless.And because Rome, which is the example of the second mode, did the one and the other, therefore she rose to such excessive power.And because she was the only one to live thus, she was also the only one to become so powerful; for having made so many companions in all of Italy, who in many things lived with [Rome] under equal laws, and on the other hand, as was said above, since Rome always reserved the seat of Empire and title of commander [for herself], these companions of Rome, without their having seen it, brought themselves into subjection with their labors and their blood.For Rome began to go outside of Italy with armies, to reduce the kingdoms in provinces and to make subjects of those who did not mind being subjects since they were used to living under kings.Since they had Roman governors and had been conquered by armies with the Roman title, they acknowledged no superior other than Rome. In such a mode, those companions of Rome who were in Italy found themselves at one stroke encircled by Roman subjects and

[253] Livy, IV 23; V 1.

dominated by an exceedingly great city as Rome had become; and when they saw the deception under which they had lived, they were not in time to remedy it -- so great was the authority Rome had taken with the external provinces, so great was the force to be found within, since her city had become so exceedingly great and so exceedingly armed.Although her companions in order to avenge injuries conspired against her, they were in a short time losers in the war, worsening their conditions, because from companions they now became subjects.This mode of procedure, as was said, was observed only by the Romans, nor can a republic that wants to expand take any other mode; for by experience there has not been shown any other more certain or more true.

The previously mentioned mode of leagues, according to which the Tuscans lived, the Achaeans, the Aetolians, and according to which the Swiss now live, is, after that of the Romans, the best mode.For while one is not able through that mode to expand much, there follow two benefits: the one that you do not easily draw war down on yourself; the other is that whatever you take you easily hold.The cause of not being able to expand much is that they can only with difficulty consult and deliberate since it is a disjointed republic [with its members] placed in various seats. It therefore also means that they are not desirous of dominating, for since there are many communities participating in that dominion, they do not much esteem an acquisition as does a single republic that hopes to enjoy the whole of it.Besides this, governing themselves by council, [a league] must needs be tardier in every decision than those who dwell within one and the same circle.[254]One also sees by experience that such a mode of procedure has a fixed limit, and there is no example that shows that one might pass beyond [such a limit].Twelve or fourteen communities are brought together, and afterwards they do not to seek to go further beyond that; for having attained the position where it appears to them that [the confederation] is able to defend itself against anyone, they do not seek greater dominion -- as much because necessity does not constrain it to have more power as because it sees no advantage in acquisitions for the causes mentioned above.For they would have to do one of two things: either continue to make companions, and this multitude would make for confusion; or they would have to make subjects -- and because they see difficulty in this and not much advantage in keeping [subjects], they do not esteem [dominion].Therefore, when they arrive at such a number that it appears to them that they live securely, they turn to two things: the one to receive supplicants and take them under protection, and by these means to bring in money from every part, that can easily be

[254]i.e., within the same circle of walls.

distributed among them; the other is to soldier for others, and take money[255] from this or that prince who hires them for his enterprises, as one sees the Swiss today do, and as one reads that those mentioned above did.Of this Titus Livy gives testimony, where he says that Philip, king of Macedon, came to parley with Titus Quintus Flaminius, and reasoning about a treaty in the presence of a praetor of the Aetolians, that said praetor came to words with Philip, who reproved him for avarice and infidelity, saying that the Aetolians were not ashamed to soldier with someone and then to send their men also into the service of the enemy, such that the insignia of Aetolia were often seen in two opposing armies.[256]One recognizes then how this mode of procedure of leagues has always been the same, and has worked similar effects.One also sees that that mode of making subjects always has been weak, and has made few profits; and when they also have passed [beyond] the mode, they have been quickly ruined.And if this mode of making subjects is useless to armed republics, for those that are disarmed, as the republics of Italy have been in our times, it is most useless.One recognizes therefore the true mode to be that which the Romans took, which is so much the more marvelous in that there was no example of it before Rome, and that no one has imitated it after Rome.And as to leagues, these are to be found only among the Swiss -- and in the Swabian league that imitates them.And, as will be said at the end of this matter, a great many orders observed by Rome, as pertinent to internal things as to those outside, are not only in our present times not imitated, but are not even taken into any account, since some of them are judged not to be true, some of them impossible, some irrelevant and useless.Such that being in this ignorance, we are prey of whoever has wished to overrun this province.And if the imitation of the Romans might seem to be difficult, that of the ancient Tuscans would not seem to be so, especially to the present Tuscans.For if the former could not, for the causes said, make an Empire like that of Rome, they were able to acquire in Italy that power which that mode of procedure allowed them. It was for a long time secure, with the highest glory of empire and of arms, and especially praiseworthy in customs and religion.That power and glory was first diminished by the French, then extinguished by the Romans; and was so extinguished, that although two thousand years ago the power of the Tuscans was great, there is almost no memory of it.That has made me think of whence this oblivion of things arises, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

[255] *soldo* -- Machiavelli puns on *soldato* (soldier), *soldo* (money), and *solda* (hire).
[256] Livy, XXXII 32-34.

5.That the changes of sects and languages together with accidents of floods and plagues extinguish the memories of things.

To those philosophers who have wished that the world be eternal, I believe that one could reply that if such antiquity were true it would be reasonable that there be memory of more than five thousand years, if one did not see how these memories of the times are extinguished by diverse causes, of which part come from men, part from heaven.Those that come from men are variations of sects and languages.For when a new sect arises, that is, a new religion, its first study is, in order to give itself reputation, to extinguish the old; and when it happens that the orderers of a new sect are of a different language, they extinguish it easily.One knows this thing [from] considering the modes that the Christian sect has taken against the Gentile; the former has obliterated all the orders, all the ceremonies of the latter, and extinguished every memory of that ancient theology.It is true that it did not succeed inextinguishing all the notice of things done by its excellent men, which arose from the former having kept the Latin language, for this they were forced to do since they had to write this new law with it.For if they had been able to write it with a new language, considering the other persecutions they did, there would not have been any record of past things.And he who reads the modes taken by Saint Gregory and by the other heads of the Christian religion, will see with what obstinacy they persecuted all the ancient memories, burning the works of poets and other historians, destroying the images and wasting everything that gave any sign of antiquity.So that if to that persecution they had conjoined a new language, one would have seen in a very short time everything forgotten.It is to be believed therefore that what the Christian sect has wished to do against the Gentile sect, the Gentile had done against those that were before it.And because these sects change two or three times in five or six thousand years, the memory of things done before that time is lost.If there yet remains any sign, it is considered to be a fabulous thing, and no credence is given to it; as happened to the history of Diodorus Siculus which, though it gives an account of forty to fifty thousand years, it is nonetheless reputed to be, as I believe it to be, a lying thing.

As for the causes that come from heaven, these are the ones that extinguish the human generation and reduce to few the inhabitants of a part of the world.And these come through plagues, or famine, or by an inundation of waters, and the most important is this last one -- as much because it is the most universal as because those that are saved are men of the mountains and rude, who have no knowledge of anything of the past and they are not able to leave anything to posterity.If among those who are saved there is someone who has such knowledge, in order to get himself reputation

and a name he will conceal and pervert it to his own mode, such that there remains to successors only as much as he has wished to write, and nothing more.And that these inundations, plagues, and famines do come, I do not believe is to be doubted -- because the histories are full of them, because one sees that effect of the oblivion of things, because it seems reasonable that it be so.For nature, as when simple bodies have gathered much superfluous matter, often moves by itself and makes a purgation that is to the health of the body, so it happens with that mixed body of the human generation, that when all the provinces are full of inhabitants, in such a mode that they are no longer able to live there nor go elsewhere for all places are occupied and full, and when human astuteness and malignity has gone as far as it can go, it must needs be of necessity that the world purge itself by one of these three modes; so that men being few and crushed live more appropriately and become better.Thus, as was said above, Tuscany was once powerful, full of religion and virtue, it had its own customs and its native language, all of which have been extinguished by the Roman power. Such that, as has been said, there remains of it only the memory of the name.

6.How the Romans proceeded in making war.

Having discussed how the Romans proceeded in expansion, we shall now discuss how they proceeded in making war. In every one of their actions one will see with what prudence they deviated from the mode universal to others, in order to make easy the way of coming to a supreme greatness. The intention of whoever makes war through choice, or in truth through ambition, is to acquire and maintain that which is acquired, and to proceed in a mode with that which enriches and does not impoverish his country and fatherland. It is necessary therefore, with respect to acquisition and maintenance, to think of not spending but rather to do everything to the utility of his public.He who wants to do all these things must take the Roman style and mode, which was first to make wars, as the French say, short and hard;[257] for coming into the field with large armies, all the wars that they had with the Latins, Samnites, and Tuscans were finished in a very short time.If all that was done by the princes of Rome until the siege of the Veientes is noted, they will all be seen to have been finished some in six, some in ten, some in twenty days.For their custom was this: immediately upon the declaration of war, they went out with armies against the enemy and immediately won the battle.When that was won, the enemy, because they did not want their countryside to be completely wasted, came to

[257] *corte e grosse* -- or, short and big.

conditions, and the Romans fined them in lands,[258] which lands were converted to private uses or were consigned to be a colony which was placed on their frontier to become a garrison [guarding] the Roman boundaries, with advantage to those colonies that had those fields and to the public advantage of Rome which had that garrison without any expense.Nor could this mode be more secure, or stronger, or more useful. For while their enemies were not in the field, that guard was enough: for if they came out in force[259] to crush that colony, the Romans also came out in force and won the day against them, and with the day won, imposing on them heavier conditions, they returned home.Thus step by step they came to acquire reputation over them and strengthening themselves.This mode they kept until they changed the mode of procedure in war, which was after the siege of Veii, where, in order to make war longer, they ordered payment for the soldiers, which before was not necessary, wars being short and they did not pay them.Although the Romans designated pay, and by virtue of this they were able to make longer wars, and in order to make more distant [ones] necessity kept them longer in the field, nonetheless they never changed the first order of finishing them quickly, according to the place and time -- nor did they ever change from sending out colonies.For the first order they held, regarding making wars brief, besides being their natural custom, the ambition of Consuls, since they stood for one year, and of that year six months were in quarters, wished to finish the war in order to triumph.As for sending colonies, it was kept [for] the usefulness and great advantage that resulted from it.They did indeed change somewhat with respect to the booty, about which they were not as liberal as they had been before, as much because it did not seem to them to be as necessary, since the soldiers had the stipend, as because the booty being greater, they planned that the public be increased by it in such a mode that they would not be constrained to make enterprises with taxes from the city.This order in a short time made the aerarium[260] very rich.These two modes then, regarding the distribution of booty and the sending of colonies, made Rome rich from war, where other princes and unwise republics were impoverished by it.And the thing was reduced into such terms that a Consul did not seem to have been able to triumph if he did not bring to his triumph much gold and silver, and every other kind of booty into the aerarium.Thus, the Romans, by the terms written above, and by finishing wars quickly, being strengthened by the lengthy weakening of

[258] *terreni*

[259] *grossi*

[4] The public treasury behind the Temple of Saturn.

enemies with defeats, and with incursions and with agreements to their advantage, always became richer and more powerful.

7.How much land the Romans gave to each colonist.

I believe that it would be difficult to find the truth about how much land the Romans distributed to each colonist For I believe they designated more or less according to the places where they sent colonies.One may judge that under every mode and in every place the distribution was sparing, in order, first, to be able to send more men, since these were assigned to be the guard of that country; and further since they lived poorly at home, it would not be reasonable that they would wish that their men would live very abundantly outside.Titus Livy says that when Veii was taken, they sent a colony there and distributed to each one three and seven-twelfths *jugeri*[261] of land, which in our mode...[262]For besides the above-written things they judged that it was not much land but well cultivated that would suffice.It was of course necessary that the colony as a whole have public fields where each could pasture his cattle, and forests where wood might be gathered for burning; without these things a colony cannot be ordered.

[261] A *jugerum* is two-thirds of an English acre.
[262] Machiavelli leaves a lacuna in the text.

8.The cause why peoples leave their native places and flood the country of others.

Since the mode of procedure in war observed by the Romans has been reasoned upon above, and how the Tuscans were attacked by the French, it does not seem to me alien to the matter to discuss how they made two kinds of wars.The one is made because of the ambition of princes of republics that seek to propagate imperium, as were the wars made by Alexander the Great and the Romans, and those which one power every day makes with another.These wars are dangerous, but they do not wholly drive out the inhabitants of a province, for it suffices for the victor to have only the obedience of the peoples, and most of the time he lets them live with their laws, and always with their houses and goods.The other kind of war is when an entire people leaves a place, necessitated by either hunger or war, and go to find a new seat and a new province, not in order to command it as did those above, but to possess it all in particular, and to chase out or kill its ancient inhabitants.This war is very cruel and very frightening.Of these wars Sallust reasons at the end of the *Jugurtha*,[263] when he says that with Jugurtha defeated, the movement of the French who were coming into Italy was felt; there he says that the Roman people fought with all the other peoples solely over who might command, but with the French they fought always for the survival[264] of one or the other.For to a prince or a republic that attacks a province, it suffices only to extinguish those who command, but these populations must needs extinguish everyone, for they wish to live on what the others lived on.The Romans had three of these very dangerous wars.The first was that when Rome was captured, which was seized by the French who had taken, as was said above, Lombardy from the Tuscans and had made it their seat.Of this, Titus Livy alleges two causes:[265] the first, as was said above,[266] that they were attracted by the sweetness of the fruits and the wine of Italy, which they lacked in France; the second, that since so many human beings had multiplied in the French kingdom that they could not feed more there, the princes of those places judged it was necessary that one part of them go to seek new land.That deliberation made, they elected as captains of those who were to leave Bellovesus and Sigovesus, two kings of the French; of whom Bellovesus came into Italy and Sigovesus passed into Spain.From the passage of that Bellovesus arose the occupation of Lombardy, and thence the first that the French made against Rome.After this was that made after the

[263] Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, II 4.
[264] *salute* -- lit., salvation.
[265] Livy, V 33-34.
[266] *D* II 4.

first Carthaginian war, when between Piombino and Pisa they killed more than two hundred thousand French.The third was when the Germans and Cimbri came into Italy, [after] having defeated several Roman armies, they were defeated by Marius.The Romans won then these three very dangerous wars. Nor was little virtue necessary to win them, for one saw afterwards that when Roman virtue was lacking and these arms lost their ancient valor, that empire was destroyed by similar peoples, which were the Goths, the Vandals, and the like, who occupied the whole Western Empire.

Such peoples issue from their countries, as was said above, driven by necessity, and the necessity arises from either hunger or from a war and oppression inflicted on them in their own countries, such that they are constrained to find new lands.And these may be of a very great number, and then with violence do they enter into the countries of others, killing their inhabitants, possessing their goods, making a new kingdom, changing the name of that province, as did Moses and those peoples that occupied the Roman Empire.For these new names that are in Italy and the other provinces arise from nothing other than their being thus named by new occupiers, as was Lombardy which was called Cisalpine Gaul, France which was called Transalpine Gaul, and is now named by the Franks for thus were those peoples called who occupied it.Slavonia was called Illyria; Hungary, Pannonia, England, Brittania, and many other provinces which have changed names which would be tedious to recount. Moses also called Judea that part of Syria occupied by him.And because I have said above that many times such peoples are driven from their own seat by war, whence they are constrained to find new lands, I wish to adduce the example of the Maurusii, peoples formerly in Syria who, feeling the coming of the Hebraic peoples and judging that they were not able to resist them, thought it better to save themselves and leave their own country than by wishing to save it also lose themselves.And they left with their families and went to Africa, where they established their seat, driving out those inhabitants that they found in those places.And so those who were not able to defend their own country were able to occupy that of another.And Procopius, who writes of the war that Belisarius made against the Vandal occupiers of Africa, reports his having read letters written on certain columns in places where these Maurusii lived, which said: "We are Maurusii, who fled before the face of Joshua the robber, son of Nun"[267] -- whence appears the cause of their departure from Syria.These peoples are very formidable, since they are driven by an ultimate necessity, and unless they encounter good arms, never can they be kept

[267] *Nos Maurusii, qui fugimus a facie Iesu latronis filii Navae*. Procopius, *De bello Vandalico*, IV 10.

back.But when those who are constrained to abandon their fatherland are not very many, they are not so dangerous as those peoples reasoned upon, for they are not able to use such violence but they must needs occupy some place with art, and having occupied it to maintain themselves by way of friends and confederates, as one sees was done by Aeneas, Dido, the Massilians and the like, all of whom were able to maintain themselves where they settled by consent of the neighbors.Peoples great [in numbers] issued forth, and their leaving was almost complete, from the countries of Scythia, places cold and poor, where from having many men and the country of a quality that it could not feed them, they were forced to leave, since there were many things to drive them out and none to keep them.If for five hundred years now it has not occurred that any of these peoples have inundated any country, it has arises from several causes.The first is the great evacuation that these countries made during the decline of the Empire, where more than thirty peoples issued forth.The second is that Germany and Hungary, whence these hosts also issued forth, now have improved their country in such a mode they are able to live there in ease and comfort, such that they are not necessitated to change place.On the other hand, since they are very warlike men, they are like a bastion to keep the Scythians, who border upon them, from presuming that they can conquer them or pass through them.Oftentimes there occurs very great movements of Tartars, which the Hungarians and the Poles then hold back, and often they take glory in that if it were not for their arms Italy and the Church would have many times felt the weight of the Tartar armies.And I wish this to suffice on the aforesaid peoples.

9. What causes commonly made wars to arise between powers.

The cause that made war arise between the Romans and the Samnites, who had been in alliance for a long time, is a common cause that arises between all powerful principates.That cause either comes by chance or is made to arise by those who desire to start the war.What arose between the Romans and the Samnites was by chance.For the Samnites, starting war against the Sidicines and then with the Campanians, had no intention of starting war with the Romans.[268]But the Campanians being oppressed, and appealing to Roman outside of the opinion of the Romans and Samnites, [the Romans] were forced, the Campanians surrendering themselves to the Romans, as a thing of theirs to defend them, and to pick up the war that it seemed to them they could not avoid with honor.For it seemed well to the

[268] Livy, VII 29-32.

Romans that they could not reasonably defend the Campanians as allies against their allies the Samnites, but it seemed to them to be much to their shame not to defend them as subjects or rather as clients; judging that if they were not able to take such a defense that it closed the way to those who would plan to come under their power.For Rome having as her end empire and glory and not quiet, could not refuse this enterprise.This same cause gave beginning to the war against the Carthaginians, because of the defense the Romans undertook of the Messinians in Sicily -- which was also by chance.But it was not indeed by chance that afterwards the second war arose between them, for Hannibal the Carthaginian captain, attacked the Saguntines, allies of the Romans in Spain, not in order to harm them, but to move the Roman arms and have occasion of fighting them and pass into Italy.[269]This mode of provoking new wars always has been customary between the powerful and those who have some respect for faith and for the other.For if I wish to make war with a prince, and there are firm conventions[270] between us that have been observed for a long time, with another justification and another color I shall attack one of his friends that is his own, knowing full well that in attacking his friend either he will resent it, and I will succeed in my attempt of making war with him; or in not resenting it he will reveal his weakness or infidelity in not defending one of his clients.And either one of these two things takes reputation from him and makes easier my designs.One ought to note then by the surrender of the Campanians what has been said above regarding the starting of war and even more regarding that remedy a city might have that is not able to defend by itself and yet wishes in every mode to defend against the one who attacks it: and that is freely to give itself to the one whom you plan to defend you -- as did the Capuans to the Romans[271] and the Florentines to King Robert of Naples, who, not wishing to defend them as allies, defended them as subjects against the forces of Castruccio of Lucca who oppressed them.

10.Money is not the sinew[272] of war, as it is according to common opinion.

Because everyone can begin a war at his disposition but not end it, a prince ought before taking up an enterprise measure his forces and govern himself accordingly.But he ought to have such prudence that he not deceive himself about his forces: and he will deceive himself every time when he

[269] Livy, XXI 5-19.
[270] *capitoli* -- lit., chapters or articles of a convention or treaty.
[271] Livy, IV 37-40.
[272] *nervo*

measures them by money[273] or by the site or by the goodwill of men, if on the other hand he lack his own arms.For the above-mentioned things do increase your forces, but they do not give them to you, and are nothing in themselves, and gives no help to anything [that is] without faithful arms.For money never suffices you without them; the strength of the countryside does not help you; and the faith and goodwill of men does not last, for these cannot be faithful to you when you cannot defend them.Every mountain, every lake, every inaccessible place becomes a plain where strong defenders are lacking.Money, also, not only does not defend you but makes you preyed upon all the sooner.Nor can that common opinion be more false that says that money is the sinew of war.That maxim is said by Quintus Curtius in the war made between Antipater the Macedonian and the Spartan king; where he narrates how the king of Sparta was necessitated to join battle because of the lack of money and he was beaten.Had he deferred battle a few days, the news would have come to Greece of the death of Alexander, whence he would have been left victorious without combat. But since he lacked money, and doubting that his army because of this lack might abandon him, he was constrained to attempt the fortune of battle.Therefore Quintus Curtius for this cause affirms that money is the sinew of war.That maxim is cited daily, and by princes who are not so prudent that to follow it would suffice.For founding themselves on it, they believe that it suffices them to defend themselves with plenty of treasure, and they do not think that if treasure had sufficed to conquer, then Darius would have conquered Alexander, the Greeks would have conquered the Romans, in our times Duke Charles would have conquered the Swiss, and a few days ago the pope and the Florentines together would not have had difficulty in conquering Francesco Maria, nephew of Pope Julius II, in the war of Urbino.But all the above named were conquered by those who reckoned not money but good soldiers to be the sinew of war.

Among the things that Croesus, king of Lydia,[274] showed to Solon the Athenian, was a countless treasure; and being then asked how [Croesus's] power appeared to him, Solon replied that he did not because of that judge him to be more powerful, for war is made with iron and not with gold, and that there could come one with more iron than he and take [the gold] away from him.Besides this, when, after the death of Alexander the Great, a multitude of French passed into Greece and then into Asia, and the French sending ambassadors to the king of Macedon to negotiate some agreement, that king, in order to show his power and to dismay them showed them a

[273] *danari* -- in the plural.
[274] He was the last king of Lydia (590 - 525 B.C.). See Herodotus, *Inquiries*, I 30.

good deal of gold and silver; whereupon the French, who up to then had been firm in the peace, broke it, such desire had arisen in them to take that gold from him. Thus was that king despoiled by that very thing that he had accumulated for his defense.The Venetians, a few years ago, still having their treasury house full of treasure, lost all the state, without being able to be defended by it.

I say therefore that it is not gold, as common opinion cries out, to be the sinews of war but good soldiers, because gold does not suffice to find good soldiers but good soldiers suffice very well to find gold.For the Romans, if they had wished to make war more with money than with iron, it would not have sufficed to have all the treasure of the world, considering the great enterprises that they had made and the difficulties that they entered into.But since they made their wars with iron they never suffered a dearth of gold, because by those who feared them it was brought even into their camps.And if that Spartan king for lack of money had to attempt the fortune of battle, what happened to him on account of money has happened many times for other causes; for it is evident that when an army lacks provisions, and is necessitated either to die of hunger or join battle, it always takes the choice of joining battle, since this is the more honorable [part] and one where fortune can in some mode favor you.It also has happened many times that when a captain sees help coming to his enemy's army, he must needs join battle with it and attempt the fortune of battle, or, waiting for it to increase, he has to fight in any case, with a thousand disadvantages to him.One has also seen (as happened to Hasdrubal, when he was attacked in the Marches by Claudius Nero together with the other Roman consul)[275] that a captain when he is necessitated either to flee or to fight, almost always elects to fight; since it seems to him that this part, although it is most dubious, might win, and on the other hand he loses in any case.There are, therefore, many necessities that befall a captain, outside of his intention, that make him choose to join battle, among which many times can be the lack of money; but money ought not be judged to be the sinew of war, more than these other things that bring men to a like necessity.It is not therefore, repeating it anew, gold that is the sinew of war but good soldiers.Money is very necessary in second place, but it is a necessity that good soldiers by themselves can conquer, for it is impossible that good soldiers lack money, as that money by itself find good soldiers.What we say is shown to be true by every history in a thousand places -- notwithstanding that Pericles counseled the Athenians to make war with all of the Peloponnese, showing that they

[275] Livy, XXVII 48.

could win that war with industry and the force of money,[276] and although the Athenians prospered at times in that war, in the end they lost; and the counsel and good soldiers of Sparta were worth more than the industry and money of Athens.But Titus Livy is a truer witness to this opinion than any other, [in the place] where (in discussing whether Alexander the Great, if he had come to Italy, would have conquered the Romans) he shows three things to be necessary in war: many and good soldiers, prudent captains, and good fortune.[277]Examining there whether the Romans or Alexander would prevail in these things, he then comes to his conclusion without ever mentioning money.The Capuans, when they were asked by the Sidicines to take up arms for them against the Samnites, must have measured their power by money and not by soldiers, for immediately upon having chosen to aid them, after two defeats they were constrained to become tributaries of the Romans, if they wished to save themselves.

11. It is not a prudent part to make friends with a prince who has more [in] opinion than [in] forces.

Titus Livy wishing to show the error of the Sidicines in relying upon the aid of the Campanians, and the error of the Campanians in believing to be able to defend them, could not have spoken livelier words than in saying, "The Campanians brought more of a name to the aid of the Sidicines, than strength to defend."[278]Whence it ought to be noted that leagues that are made with princes who do not have either the means to aid you because of the distance of the site, or forces to do so because of his disorder or some other cause of his own, bring more fame than aid to those who rely on them: as happened in our [times] to the Florentines, when in 1479 the pope and the king of Naples attacked them, being friends with the king of France, they drew from that friendship " more a name than a defense"[279] -- as would also happen to that prince who relied on the Emperor Maximilian to make whatever enterprise, for this is one of those friendships that would bring to one who made it "more a name than a defense," as it is said in this text that the Capuans brought to the Sidicines.The Capuans erred then in this part, for it appeared to them that they had more forces than they had.And thus so little is the prudence of men, that at times, neither knowing how nor being able to defend themselves, they wish to undertake the enterprise of defending

[276] Thucydides, I 141-143.
[277] Livy, IX 17.
[278] *Campani magis nomen in auxilium Sidicinorum, quam vires ad praesidium attulerunt.* -- Livy,VII 29.
[279] *magis nomen, quam praesidium*

others; as also did the Tarentines, who, since there were Roman armies sent against the Samnite army, sent ambassadors to the Roman consul to make him understand that they wished peace between the two peoples, and that they would make war against the one who disturbed that peace.Such that the consul, laughing at this proposal, sounded the call to battle in the presence of the said ambassadors and commanded his army to go find the enemy, showing to the Tarentines with work and not with words of what reply they were worthy.And having in the present chapter reasoned of the policies[280] that princes take, adversely, for the defense of others, I wish in the following to speak of those that they take to defend themselves.

12. If it is better, fearing to be attacked, to bring on or await war.

I have heard men much practised in the things of war dispute at times whether, if there are two princes of almost equal forces, and the bolder one had proclaimed war against the other, it is a better policy on the part of that other to await the enemy within his own confines or to go to find him at home and attack him.I have heard reasons adduced for each policy.He who defends going to attack others, cites the counsel Croesus gave to Cyrus when, having arrived at the confines of the Massagetae to make war on them, their queen, Tomyris, sent him word that he might elect whichever of two parts he wished: either to enter into her kingdom where she would await him, or wish that she would come to find him.The thing coming up for debate, Croesus, against the opinion of the others, said that he should go find her, alleging that if he conquered her far from her kingdom that he would not take away the kingdom from her, because she would have time to reorganize herself; but if she were conquered within her confines, he could follow her in her flight, and not giving her space to reorganize herself, take away the state.[281]He also cites the counsel that Hannibal gave to Antiochus,[282] when this king planned to make war on the Romans, in which he shows how the Romans could be conquered only in Italy, because there others could make use of their arms and their riches and their friends;but whoever fought them outside of Italy, and left Italy free for them, left them that fountain that never lacked life, giving them forces where needed.He concludes that, as for the Romans, one could take Rome sooner than the empire, and Italy sooner than the other provinces.He also cites Agathocles, who, being unable to

[280] *partiti*
[281] Herodotus, I 205-15.
[282] Antiochus III, king of Syria, called the Great (241-187 B.C.). Livy, XXXIV 60.

sustain war at home, attacked the Carthaginians who were making [war] on him, and he reduced them to asking for peace.[283]He cites Scipio, who, in order to remove the war from Italy, attacked Africa.[284]

He who speaks to the contrary, says that whoever wishes to make evil befall an enemy moves him away from home.He cites the Athenians who, while they made the war comfortably at home, they remained superior, and when they moved away and went with their armies to Sicily, they lost liberty.He cites poetic fables where it appears that Antaeus, king of Libya, when attacked by Hercules, the Egyptian, was unconquerable while he awaited him inside the confines of his kingdom; but when, because of the astuteness of Hercules, he moved away, he lost the state and life. Whence a place was given to the fable that Antaeus, being on earth, restored his forces through his Mother, who was the Earth; and that Hercules, perceiving this, raised him on high and moved him away from the earth.He also cites modern judgments of this.Everyone knows how Ferdinand, king of Naples, was in our time held to be a very wise prince, and the rumor coming to him, two years before his death, that the king of France, Charles VIII, wanted to come to attack him, having made many preparations, he fell ill; and when about to die, among other notes that he left to Alfonso, his son, was that he should await the enemy within the kingdom, and for nothing in the world take forces outside his state, but await him within his confines wholly complete.This was not observed by him but he sent an army to the Romagna; without fighting he lost that [army] and the state.

The reasons that, besides the other things said, are adduced by all sides are: that he who attacks comes with greater spirit than he who awaits, which makes the army more confident; besides this, he takes away the enemy's being able conveniently to avail himself of his own things, not being able to use his subjects who have been plundered; and by having the enemy at home the lord is constrained to have more respect in taking money from them and in burdening them, such that he comes to dry up the fountain that enabled him to sustain the war, as Hannibal said.Besides this, his soldiers by finding themselves in the country of another are more necessitated to fight, and that necessity makes virtue, as we have said many times.On the other side, it is said that awaiting the enemy is to await with great advantage, because without any inconvenience you are able to present him with many disadvantages with provisions and with every other thing that an army might need: you are able better to impede his plans, by the information about the countryside that you have more than he does; you are able with more forces

[283] Livy, XXVIII 43.
[284] Livy, XXVIII 43-44.

to meet him by being more easily to unite all of them, which of course could not be done if all were far from home; you are able when defeated easily to reorganize yourself: both because most of your army will save itself by having nearby refuges, and reinforcement has not far to come -- such that you come to risk all forces and not all fortune, while if you go afar you risk all fortune and not all forces.And there have been some who in order better to weaken his enemy have let him enter several days' marches into their country and take many towns, so that leaving garrisons in all of them, his army is weakened and they might be able afterwards to fight him more easily.

But in order for me to say now what I understand of this, I believe that one has to make this distinction: either I have my country armed, as the Romans or as the Swiss have; or I have disarmed it, as the Carthaginians had and as the king of France and the Italians have.In the latter case, one ought to have the enemy far from home, for since your virtue is in money and not in men, whenever you are impeded in the way of [getting money], you are finished; nor is there anything that impedes you more than war at home.As examples there are the Carthaginians, who, while they had their home free, could with revenues make war against the Romans; but when they were attacked could not resist Agathocles.The Florentines had no remedy against Castruccio, lord of Lucca, because he made war against them at home, so that they had to give themselves over to Robert of Naples in order to be defended.But with Castruccio dead, these same Florentines had the spirit to attack the Duke of Milan at home, and to work to take the kingdom from him; so much virtue did the [Florentines] show in distant wars and so much vileness in those nearby!But when kings are armed as Rome was armed and as are the Swiss, the more difficult are they to conquer the closer you approach them.For these bodies are able to unite more forces and resist a single impetus than they are able to attack others.Nor does the authority of Hannibal move me in this case, for passion and his profit made him speak in such a way to Antiochus.For had the Romans had in the same period of time those three defeats in France that they had in Italy from Hannibal, without doubt they would have been finished; for they would not have made use of the remainders of the armies as they made use of them in Italy: they would not have had those same advantages to reorganize themselves; nor could they have with those same forces resist the enemy, as they were able to do.One does not find that they ever sent their armies outside that surpassed fifty thousand persons, to attack a province, but in order to defend at home they put into arms against the French, after the First Punic War, eighteen hundred thousand.Nor would they have been able then to defeat these in Lombardy, as theydefeated them in Tuscany; for against so large a number of enemies

they would not have been able to conduct so many forces to such a distance, nor to fight them with the same advantage.The Cimbri defeated a Roman army in Germany, nor had the Romans any remedy there.But when they arrived in Italy, and they were able to put all their forces together, they finished them.It is easy to defeat the Swiss away from home, whither they are not able to send more than thirty or forty thousand men; but to defeat them at home, where they are able to bring together one hundred thousand, is difficult to the highest degree.I therefore conclude anew that that prince who has his people armed and ordered to war should always await at home a powerful and dangerous war, and he does not go out to encounter it.But that one who has his subjects disarmed and the country unused to war should always go as far away from home as he can.And thus both the one and the other, each in his own degree, will defend himself best.

13.That one comes from low to great fortune more through fraud than through force.

I reckon it to be an extremely true thing that seldom or never does it come about that men of small fortune come to great ranks without force and without fraud, although that rank has been attained by others not by themselves but by its being given or left by inheritance.Nor do I believe that one ever finds force alone to suffice, but one will find that fraud alone will indeed suffice: as one who will read the life of Philip of Macedon[285]will clearly see, of Agathocles the Sicilian,[286] and many others like them, who from the lowest or at least a low fortune have attained either to a kingdom or extremely great empires.Xenophon shows in his life of Cyrus[287] this necessity of deception, considering that the first expedition that he makes Cyrus make against the king of Armenia is full of fraud, and how it was with deception and not with force that he seized his kingdom.One can only conclude from such an action that for a prince who wishes to do great things, it is necessary to learn to deceive.Besides this, he also makes him deceive Cyaxares, king of the Medes, his maternal uncle, in many modes; he shows that Cyrus without that fraud could not have attained to that greatness to which he came.Nor do I believe that one ever finds anyone placed in low fortune having come to great imperium only by open force and ingenuously, but it can indeed be done only by fraud, as did Giovan Galeazzo by taking the state and the imperium of Lombardy from Messer Bernabò, his uncle.What princes are

[285]Philip II, King of Macedon (359-336 B.C.).
[286]Tyrant of Syracuse (317-289 B.C.). See *Prince*, VIII.
[287]*Cyropaedia*, II iv 32.

necessitated to do at the beginnings of their augmentations, republics are also necessitated, until they have become powerful and force alone suffices.And because Rome, either by chance or by choice, took in every part all the modes necessary to come to greatness, she also did not lack this one.Nor could she have used a greater deceit at the beginning, to take the mode of discourse [used] above by us, than that of making companions.For under this name she made them servants, as were the Latins and other peoples round about.For first she availed herself of their arms to subdue the neighboring peoples and take the reputation of the state.After subduing them, she came to such an increase, that she could beat down anyone.The Latins never saw themselves as being wholly servants until they saw [Rome] defeat the Samnites twice and they were forced into a treaty.That victory so increased the great reputation of the Romans with far-off princes, who by means of it felt the Roman name and not her arms that it thus generated envy and suspicion in those who saw and felt her arms, among whom were the Latins.So powerful was this envy and this fear that not only the Latins but also the colonies that they had in Latium, together with the Campanians who had a little before been defended [by the Romans], conspired against the name of Rome.The Latins set this war in motion in the mode that was said above about how the greater part of wars are set in motion,[288] not attacking the Romans but defending the Sidicines against the Samnites, against whom the Samnites made war under license from the Romans.That it is very true that the Latins were so moved by having recognized this deceit, Titus Livy demonstrates through the mouth of Annius Setinus, the Latin praetor, who in council said these words to them:"For if even now under the shadow of equal treaties we can endure servitude, etc."[289]One sees therefore that the Romans in the beginnings of their augmentations were also not lacking in fraud, which has always been necessary for those to use who from small beginnings wish to leap to sublime ranks: which is less vituperable the more it is concealed, as was this of the Romans.

14. Men deceive themselves many times, believing that humility conquers pride.

One sees many times that humility not only does not help but harms, especially when used toward insolent men, who either through envy or another cause have conceived hatred of you.Of this our historian attests[290]

[288] *D* II 9.
[289] *Nam si etiam nunc sub umbra foederis aequi servitutem pati possumus,* etc. Livy, VIII 4.
[290] *fa fede* – lit., "makes or gives faith."

with respect to the cause of war between the Romans and the Latins.[291]For upon the Samnites complaining to the Romans that the Latins had attacked them, the Romans did not wish to prohibit the Latins from waging war, desiring not to irritate them.Not only did this not irritate them, but made them become even more spirited against [the Romans], and they very quickly revealed themselves as enemies.Of this the words used by the prefect Annius, the Latin praetor, attest, where in that same council he said:"You have tested their patience, denying them troops: who can doubt that they were angry?Yet they bore that pain.They heard that we were preparing an army against the Samnites their confederates, yet they did not move from the city.Whence then such modesty of theirs, if not their consciousness of men, ours and theirs?"[292]One therefore recognizes very clearly by this text, how the patience of the Romans increased the arrogance of the Latins.Therefore a prince should never wish to lack his rank, and he ought never by consent let go of anything, if he wishes to let go of it honorably, except when he is able or believes he is able to keep it.For it is almost always better, being conducted in a thing to such terms that you are not able to let it go in the mode said, to let it be taken by forces than by fear of forces.For if you let it go from fear, you do so to avoid war, and most of the time you will not avoid it.For he to whom you will have with open vileness conceded that will not stand still, but will wish to take other things from you, and he will burn the hotter against you esteeming you less.On the other side, you will find defenders colder in favoring you, since they think you to be either weak or vile.But if you immediately, upon discovering the will of the adversary, prepare forces, even if they be inferior to his, he will begin to esteem you; and since [you will be] esteemed more by the other princes about you, these come to wish to aid you when you are in arms, who, if you abandoned yourself, never would have aided you.This is intended [to apply] when you have one enemy; but when you have more, to render up some of the things you possess to one of them so as to gain him over, even though war has been already opened,[293] and to cut him off from the other confederates who are your enemies, is always a prudent policy.

---

[291] Livy, VIII 2.

[292] *Tentastis patientiam negando militem: quis dubitat exarsisse eos? Pertulerent tamen hunc domorem. Exercitus nos parare adversus Samnites foederatos suos audierunt, nec moverunt se ab urbe. Unde haec illis tanta modestia, nisi conscientia virium et nostrarum et suarum*? Livy, VIII 4

[293] *scoperta* -- lit., discovered or opened.

15.Weak states will always be ambiguous in the making of decisions and slow deliberations are always harmful.

In this same matter, and in these same beginnings of war between the Latins and the Romans, one can note how in every consultation it is well to come to the individual [point] of what one has to deliberate upon, and not stand always in ambiguity and uncertainty about the thing.One sees that manifested in the consultation that the Latins made when they thought of alienating themselves from the Romans.For the Romans, having foreseen this evil humor that had entered the Latin peoples, in order to confirm the thing and in order to see what could be done to regain these peoples without putting hands to arms, made them to understand that they should send eight citizens to Rome, because they had to consult with them.The Latins, having understood this, and being conscious of many things done against the will of the Romans, called a council to order who should go to Rome, and to give them a commission on what they were to say.While disputing this in council, Annius, their praetor, said these words:"Judging that it belongs to the highest of our affairs, you should consider more what ought to done than what is to be said.It is easy, the measures decided upon, to accommodate words to deeds."[294]These words without doubt are very true, and they ought to be savored by every prince and every republic; for in ambiguity and uncertainty about what others wish to do, they do not know how to accommodate words.But once the mind[295] is firm, and what is to be executed is deliberated, it is an easy thing to find words.I have noted this part the more willingly as I have so many times known such ambiguity to have harmed our public actions, with damage and shame to our republic.And always, whenever there are dubious parts, and where spirit is needed to decide them, will there be this ambiguity, when counsels and deliberations are [done] by weak men.

Slow and late deliberations too are no less harmful than the ambiguous, especially those that have to be deliberated in favor of some friend, for with their slowness they aid no person, and one harms oneself.Deliberations thus made proceed either from weakness of spirit and of forces, or from the malignity of those who have to deliberate -- who, moved by their own passion or wish to ruin the state or to carry out some other desire of theirs, do not let the deliberation follow, but they impede and thwart it.For good citizens, even when they see a popular ardor[296] turning itself to a pernicious side, never impede deliberation, especially of those things that do not wait for

[294] *Ad summam rerum nostrarum pertinere arbitror, ut cogitetis magis quid agendum nobis, quam quid loquendum sit. Facile erit explicatis consiliis, accommodare rebus verba.* Livy, VIII 4.
[295] *animo*
[296] *foga* -- impetuosity or ardor.

time.After Hieronymus, tyrant of Syracuse, died,[297] since there was a great war between the Carthaginians and the Romans, the Syracusans came to dispute if they ought to seek after Roman friendship or Carthaginian.Such was the ardor[298] of the parties that the thing stood in ambiguity, nor could any side can be taken, until finally Apollonide, one of the first in Syracuse, with one of his orations full of prudence, showed how those who held the opinion of adhering to the Romans were not to be blamed, nor those who wished to follow the Carthaginian side, but that it was well to detest that ambiguity and tardiness in taking a side, for he saw in all such ambiguity the ruin of the republic; but if a side should be taken, whatever it would be, one could hope for some good.Nor could Titus Livy show more than he does in this part[299] the damage that being in suspense brings after it.He demonstrates it also in this case of the Latins, for when they looked to the Lavinians for aid against the Romans, they so deferred deliberating upon it that they had just gone outside the gate with troops to give them succor, when the news came that the Latins had been defeated.Whereupon Milonius, their praetor, said: "This little journey will cost us much with the Roman people."[300]For if they had decided early either to aid or not aid the Latins, not aiding they would not have irritated the Romans, and by aiding them, the aid being in time, they could have, with the addition of their forces, make them win.But in deferring they came to lose in every mode, as happened to them.And if the Florentines had made note of this text, they would not have had with the French such damages and such vexations as they had in the passage that King Louis XII of France made in Italy [in coming] against Lodovico, duke of Milan.For when the king was considering such a passage, he sought an accord with the Florentines, and the ambassadors that were before the king agreed with him that they would be neutrals, and that the king in coming to Italy would maintain their state and receive them in protection.He gave that city a month to ratify it.Such ratification was deferred by those who, with little prudence, favored the affairs of Lodovico; such that the king, being on the point of victory, and the Florentines then wishing to ratify it, the ratification was not accepted, for he knew the Florentines had come [because they were] forced and not voluntarily to his friendship.This cost the city of Florence much money, and made [them] nearly lose the state, as afterwards, at another time and for a like cause, happened to them.So much more to be

[297] See above II 2.
[298] *lo ardore*
[299] Livy, XXIV 28.
[300] The quotation is in Italian: *Questo poco della via ci costerà assai col Popolo romano*. Livy, VIII 11.

condemned was that part, for it was not of any service to Duke Lodovico.If he had won, he would have shown many more signs of enmity against the Florentines than had the king.Although the evil that arises in republics from this weakness has been discussed above in another chapter, nonetheless having occasion anew because of a new accident, I have wished to repeat it, since it seems to me matter that ought especially be noted by republics similar to ours.

16.How much the soldiers of our times are in disformity with ancient orders.

The most important battle that the Roman people ever had in any war with any nation, was that with the Latin peoples in the consulship of Torquatus and Decius.[301]For every reason indicates that as the Latins by having lost it became slaves, so would the Romans have been servants had they not won it.Of this opinion is Titus Livy, for in every part he makes the armies equal: in order, virtue, obstinacy and number.[302]The only difference was that the heads of the Roman army were more virtuous than those of the Latin army.One sees also how in the management of this battle there arose two accidents that had not arisen before and of which afterwards examples are rare: that is, of the two consuls, in order to hold firm the spirits[303] of the soldiers and obedient to their commandments[304] and determined to fight, the one killed himself and the other his son.The parity that Titus Livy says exists in these armies was that, by having soldiered together for a long time, they were equal in language, orders and arms, for in ordering battle they had one and the same mode, and their orders and heads of their orders had the same names.It was therefore necessary, being of equal forces and equal virtue, that there arose some extraordinary thing that made firm and more obstinate the spirits of the one or the other; in that obstinacy, as has been said at other times, victory consists.For while it lasts in the breasts of those who fight, armies never turn.And because this lasted more in the breasts of the Romans than of the Latins, partly chance, partly the virtue of the two consuls, made it happen that Torquatus had to kill his son, and Decius himself.Titus Livy shows, in showing this parity of forces, all the orders that the Romans had in the armies and in battles.Since he explicates these at length, I shall not otherwise repeat it but I shall only discuss that which I judge notable and those that, by being neglected by all captains of these times, have made for

[301] In 340 B.C.
[302] Livy, VIII 4-9.
[303] *animi*
[304] *comandamenti* and not *comandi*

much disorder in the armies and battles.I say then that by the text of Livy one recollects that the Roman army had three principal divisions, which, Tuscanly, one is able to call three *schiere*.[305]They called the first *hastati*,[306] the second *principes*,[307] the third *triarii*, and each of these had its own horses.In ordering a battle, they put the *hastati* forward; in second place, right in back of them, they put the *principi*; in the third, still in the same file, they disposed the *triarii*.[308]The cavalries of these three orders were placed to the right and left of these three battalions; the formations of these cavalries, from their form and place, were called *alae* because they appeared like two wings of that body.They ordered the first formation, of the *hastati*, which was in front, in a mode so compactly together that it could push back and resist the enemy.The second formation, of *principes*, since it was not to fight at first, was well-suited to succor the first when it was beaten back or overthrown; they were not [formed] closely, but maintained their orders thinly, and in such a way that they could receive into themselves the first rank without disordering it, whenever pushed by the enemy it was necessitated to withdraw.The third formation, of *triarii*, had the orders even thinner than the second, by being able, when needed, to receive in themselves the two first ranks of the *principes* and the *hastati*. These formations disposed then in this form, began the battle, and if the *hastati* were forced back or overcome, they retreated into the gaps left in the order of the *principes*, and all united together, making of the two formations one body, re-start the battle.If these two were also thrown back, when forced they all retreated into the gaps of the orders of the *triarii*, and all three formations becoming one body renewed the battle, where being overcome, not being able any more to re-form themselves, they lost the day.And because every time this last formation of *triarii* was brought in the army was in danger, there arose that proverb,"Affairs have been brought to the *triarii*,"[309] which in Tuscan usage is to say,"We have played our last stake."The captains of our times, as they have abandoned all these other orders, and they do not observe any part of the ancient discipline, have thus abandoned this part, which is not of little importance, for he who so orders himself is able to re-form himself three times in battles; for him to lose he has to have fortune an enemy three times, and he has to have a virtue encounter him sufficient to conquer him three times.But he who stands only the first blow, as do all Christian armies today, can easily lose; for any disorder, any semi-virtue, can take victory away from

[305] i.e., formations
[306] *hastati* -- those armed with spears.
[307] *principes* -- originally the first rank.
[308] *triarii* -- the oldest and most experienced soldiers.
[309] *Res redacta est ad triaros*. Livy, VIII 8.

him.That which makes our armies lack the capacity to re-form themselves three times is [that they have] lost the mode of receiving one formation into the other.That happens because battles are ordered at present with one of these two disorders: either they place their formations shoulder to shoulder and make their battle-array wide across and thin in depth, which makes it very weak by having few [men] from front to rear; or, whenever to make it stronger they re-structured the formations in the Roman manner, if the first front was broken, not having them ordered to be received by the second, they all become entangled together and break themselves.For if the one in front is pushed back, it collides with the second; if the second wishes to go forward, it is impeded by the first; whence with the first colliding with the second, and the second the third, such confusion arises that often the slightest accident ruins an army.The Spanish and French armies in the battle of Ravenna, where Monsieur de Foix,[310] captain of the French troops, died (which was according to our times a very well-fought battle), were ordered in the first of the above-written modes, that is that both armies came with all of their troops ordered shoulder to shoulder, in such a mode that neither had but one front and much greater in width than in depth.This always happened to them where they had a great plain as they had at Ravenna; for knowing the disorder made by falling back, they avoid it when they can by putting themselves in one file, making the front long, as has been said. But when the countryside restricts them, they stand in the above-written disorder without thinking of remedy.With this same disorder they ride through enemy countryside, whether plundering or carrying out some other operation of war.In Santo Regolo, in the [territory] of Pisa, and elsewhere, where the Florentines were broken by the Pisani[311] during the times of war between the Florentines and that city [because of] its rebellion after the passage of Charles, king of France, into Italy; that ruin did not arise from anywhere else but from allied cavalry, which, being in front and thrown back by the enemy, ran through the Florentine infantry and broke it up; whence all the remainder of the troops turned back.And Messer Ciriaco dal Borgo, former head of the Florentine infantry, has affirmed in my presence many times that they would never have been broken except by the cavalry of the allies.The Swiss, who are masters of modern wars, when they soldiered with the French, above all things took care to place themselves on the flank, so that the allied cavalry, if it is thrown back, does not strike them.Although these things seem easy to understand, and very easy to do, nonetheless one does not as yet find any of our contemporary captains who imitates ancient orders and corrects modern

[310] The battle at Ravenna was fought in 1512, with Gaston de Foix the commander of the French.
[311] May 21, 1498.

ones.And although they still have their army in three parts, calling one part the advance guard, the other the battle or main body, and another the rear-guard, it serves nothing other than to command them in their billeting.But in using them, as was said above, it is rare that all these bodies, are not made to run one and the same fortune.

Because many to excuse their ignorance allege that the violence of artillery does not suffer that many orders of the ancients to be used in our times, I wish to dispute this matter in the following chapter, and I shall examine if artillery so impedes that one is not able to use the ancient virtue.

17. How much artillery should be esteemed by armies in present times and if that opinion universally held of it is true.

When I consider, besides the other things above-written, how many combats in the field[312] (called in our times by a word from the French *giornate*,[313] and by the Italians *fatti d'arme*[314]), were fought by Romans at different times, there comes to my consideration the universal opinion of many who would have it that had there been artillery in those times, the Romans would not have been permitted, or not so easily, to take provinces, make tributaries of peoples, as they did, nor in any mode have made such mighty acquisitions.[315]They also say that, by means of these instruments of fire, men cannot use or show their virtue as they could in antiquity.They add a third thing: that one comes to battles with more difficulty than one formerly did, nor is one able to keep in the midst of these the orders of those times, such that war will be reduced in time to artillery.Judging it not out of place to dispute if these opinions are true, and how artillery might have increased or diminished the forces of armies, and if they take or give occasion to good captains of operating virtuously, I shall begin to speak as to their first opinion that the ancient Roman armies could not have made the acquisitions they did if there had been artillery.Responding to that, I say that one makes war either defensively or offensively.Whence one has first to examine for which of these two modes of war it is more useful or more harmful.Although there is that to be said for each side, nonetheless I believe that without comparison it does more harm to the defense than to the offense.I say that the reason is that whoever defends is either within a [walled] town[316] or is

[312] *zuffe campali*
[313] lit., days
[314] lit., feats of arms
[315] *ne arebbono in alcuno modo fatto si gagliardi acquisti* -- or: nor have made in any mode such vigorous or bold acquisitions.
[316] *dentro una terra* -- the land or territory within walls.

out in the countryside within a stockade.If he is within a [walled] town, either the town is small as are the greater part of fortresses, or it is large.In the first case, he who defends is wholly lost, for the impetus of artillery is such that no wall is found, however great, that is not knocked down in a few days; and if whoever is within does not have a good [amount of] space, and with trenches and shelters,[317] in which to retreat, he is lost.Neither is he able to sustain the impetus of the enemy who would attempt to enter after the breaching of the wall nor would the artillery he had avail him.For this is a maxim, that where men are able to move *en-masse* and with impetus, artillery cannot repel them.Therefore in the defense of [walled] towns[318] the fury of ultramontane attacks is not repelled.The attacks of Italians are indeed repelled, which are not *en-masse* for they go into battle a few at a time, which, by a very fitting name, are called skirmishes by them.Those who come with this disorder and this coldness to a breach in a wall where there is artillery, go to an evident death, and against them artillery does avail.But if those who are compactly massed, so that one pushes the other, go into a breach, and if they are not repelled by either trenches or shelters, they then enter into every place, and artillery does not hold them; and if some die it cannot be so many as to prevent victory.

That this is true is known from many sieges made by the ultramontanes in Italy, especially that of Brescia.For when that [walled] townrebelled from the French, who still held the fortress for the king of France, the Venetians, in order to repel the attack against them that could come from the town, provided with artillery the entire road that descended from the fortress to the city, and placed them in front and on the flanks and in every other opportune place.Of these, Monsieur de Foix took no account; however he, with a squadron [of cavalry], which dismounted, passing through the midst of them, took the city, nor does one hear that he received any memorable damage.So that he who defends a little town, as was said, and finds his walls on the ground,[319] not having space with shelters and trenches in which to retreat, and having to trust in artillery, quickly loses.But if you defend a large town, and have the conveniences for retreating, nonetheless artillery without comparison is more useful to one who is outside than one who is inside.Because, first, to wish that an artillery injure those who are outside, you are necessitated to raise yourself with it from the level of the ground; for, standing on the level, every little embankment and shelter that the enemy makes lets him be secure, and you are not able to injure

[317] *e con fossi e con ripari* – lit., with dikes and dams, cf. *Prince*, XXV.
[318] *terre*
[319] *e truovisi le mura in terra* – lit., "finds his walls on the earth."

him.Upon your having raised and dragged it up to some passageway of the walls, or in some mode raised yourself from the earth, you take along two difficulties.The first is that you are unable to conduct there artillery of such size and power as he on the outside can bring, since one cannot in small spaces manage great things.The other is that when you are indeed able to conduct it there, you are not able to make such trustworthy[320] and secure shelters to save the said artillery as those outside are able to do, being on such ground and having those conveniences and that space that they themselves might wish.Hence it is impossible for one who defends a town to have artillery in high places, when those on the outside have much and powerful artillery; and if one has to come down with it to low places, it becomes in good part useless, as was said.Thus the defense of the city is reduced to defense of it with hand [weapons],[321] as was done in antiquity, and with light artillery.If this light artillery is of some use with respect to [such a defense], it brings a disadvantage that counterbalances the advantage of artillery.For because of it the walls of the town are reduced, low and almost buried in the trenches; so that if it comes to hand-to-hand combat, either by the walls being beaten down or the trenches being filled, the one who is within has many more disadvantages than he had earlier.And therefore, as was said above, these instruments avail more one who besieges towns than one who is besieged.As for the third thing, retiring into a camp inside a stockade in order to do battle only at your convenience or advantage, I say that as for this part you ordinarily have no more remedy of defending yourself from not fighting than the ancients had, and on account of artillery you have sometimes a great disadvantage.For if the enemy comes upon you and he has a slight advantage of ground as can easily happen, and he finds himself higher than you, or you have not as yet made your embankments and covered yourself well with them on his arrival, immediately and without your having any remedy, he dislodges you, and you are forced to go out of your fortifications and come to blows.That happened to the Spanish in the battle of Ravenna, who being fortified between the river of the Ronco and an embankment, and not having it thrown it up high enough and by the French having a slight advantage of ground, they were constrained by artillery to leave their fortifications and come to blows.But given, as it ought to be most of the time, that the place you have taken for a camp will be loftier than the others [coming] against it, and the embankments are good and secure, such that by means of the site and your other preparations the enemy dares not to assault you, one will see in this case those modes that anciently were those used

[320] *fedeli* -- lit., faithful

[321] *le braccia* -- i.e., with hand-to-hand fighting.

when one was with his army in a position where he could not be struck, which are: to course the countryside, take or besiege towns friendly to you, to impede your provisions, such that you will be forced by some necessity to leave camp and come to battle, where artillery, as will be said below, does not work well.Considering then for what reasons the Romans made wars, and seeing how almost all the wars they made were to attack others and not to defend themselves, one will see, if the things said above be true, how they had more of the advantage, and they would have made their acquisitions more quickly, if there had been [artillery] in those times.

As to the second thing, that men are not able to show their virtue as they could in antiquity, on account of artillery, I say that it is true that where men have to show it a few at a time, they [have to] bear more dangers than earlier, when they have to scale a town or make similar assaults, where men are not bound up together but they have to appear, each by himself, one after the other.It is also true that captains and heads of armies have been exposed more to danger of death than earlier, since artillery can reach them every place; nor does it avail them to be in the last squadrons and protected by the strongest men.Nonetheless one sees that both these two dangers rarely do extraordinary harms.For towns that are well-fortified cannot be scaled, nor does one with weak assaults assault them, but if they are to be taken the thing is brought to a siege, as was done in antiquity.And even in those taken by assault, the dangers are not greater than they were earlier; for they did not lack, even at that time, for one who defended towns, things to shoot, which, if they were not so furious, had the same effect as to the killing of men.As to the death of captains and *condottieri*, there are in the last twenty-four years, during which there have been wars in Italy, fewer such examples than there were during ten years of time among the ancients.For, except Count Lodovico della Mirandola, who died at Ferrara when the Venetians a few years ago assaulted that state, and the Duke of Nemours, who died abroad at Cerignola, it has not happened that artillery has killed anyone; for Monsieur de Foix at Ravenna died by steel and not fire.Hence if men do not demonstrate their virtue particularly, that arises not from artillery but from the bad orders and from weakness of armies, since they lack virtue in the whole, they are unable to show it in the part.

As to the third thing said by them, that one cannot come to hands but that war will be conducted wholly by artillery, I declare this opinion to be wholly false; and will always be held to be so by those who wish to employ their armies according to ancient virtue.For he who wishes to make an army good, must needs with exercises, either simulated or real, accustom his men to approach the enemy, and come to fighting them with the sword and

pressed chest to chest, and he ought to depend more on infantry than on cavalry, for reasons that will be said below.When one is founded on infantry and in the modes mentioned above, then artillery becomes wholly useless, for infantry, in approaching the enemy, can more easily avoid artillery shot than they in antiquity could avoid the impetus of elephants, scythed chariots, and other unfamiliar strokes that the Roman infantry had to encounter, against which they always found the remedy; and so much more easily would they have found it against these, for artillery can harm you for a shorter time than that in which elephants and chariots could.For the latter can, in the midst of combat, disorder you, the former only impedes you at the beginning of the combat, and that impediment infantry can easily avoid, either by moving covered by the nature of the site, or by lying on the earth when they shoot.Even this, by experience, has been seen not to be necessary, especially when defending oneself against heavy artillery -- which they cannot in any way balance, either they go too high and do not find you or they go too low and do not reach you.

When the armies then come hand-to-hand, this is clearer than light, that neither large nor small [caliber artillery] can harm you.For if [the enemy] has artillery before him, it becomes your prisoner; if it is behind him, it harms friends before it does you; on the flank, it cannot yet wound you in a way that you cannot go to find it, and it comes about that the effect mentioned follows.Nor is this much disputed, for it has been seen in the example of the Swiss, who at Novara in 1513, without artillery and without cavalry, went to find the French army [who were] provided with artillery within their fortifications, and they defeated it without having any impediment from [artillery].The reason is, besides those things said above, that artillery has need of being guarded if one wants that it work, either by walls, trenches, or embankments; and if it lacks one of these guards, it is taken prisoner or becomes useless, as happens when it has to be defended with men -- as happens in battles and combats in the countryside.On the flank, it is not possible to employ it except in the way that the ancients employed instruments of discharge, that are placed outside the squadrons, so that they could fight outside their orders; and every time that they were charged by cavalry or others, their refuge was [to go] behind the legions.Who counts on [artillery] otherwise, does not well understand it, and he puts his trust on a thing that easily can deceive him.And if the Turk by means of artillery against the Sophy and the Sultan has had victory, it came about not by its virtue but by the unaccustomed noise frightening their cavalry.

I conclude, then, coming to the end of this discourse that artillery might be useful in an army when it is mixed with ancient virtue, but without it that it is very useless against a virtuous army.

18. How by the authority of Rome and the example of ancient militia, one ought to esteem infantry more than cavalry.

And one is able for many reasons and by many examples to demonstrate clearly how much the Romans in all military actions esteemed more the militia on foot than that on horse, and on that [estimation] based all the plans for their forces, as one sees by many examples -- and among others when they fought with the Latins near Lake Regillus, where, when the Roman army was already giving way, in order to support them, they made their men on horse dismount [to fight] on foot, and renewing the combat in that way, they had the victory.Here one manifestly sees the Romans having more confidence in [their men] when on foot than when they were on horseback.They used this same means in many other combats, and they always found it the optimum remedy in their dangers.

Nor should one oppose to this the opinion of Hannibal, who, seeing in the battle of Cannae that the consuls had made their cavalrymen dismount, making mock of such a device said:"How much better if he had handed the knights over to me in chains!"[322]That is, I would have preferred that they gave them to me bound.That opinion, even though it had been in the mouth of a most excellent man, nonetheless if one has to go behind authority, one ought to believe more in a Roman republic, and in the so many most excellent captains who were in it, than in one Hannibal alone --although, even without authorities, there are manifest reasons.For a man on foot can go into many places where a horse cannot go; he can be taught to observe order, and, disturbed though he might be, he can reassume it; it is difficult, however, to make horses observe order, and impossible, when they are disturbed, to reorder them.Besides this one finds, as among men, that some horses have little spirit[323] and some have much of it, and it happens many times that a spirited horse is mounted by a cowardly man, and a cowardly horse by a spirited one; and in whatever way this disparity comes about, uselessness and disorder arise.Ordered infantry can easily break cavalry, and they are with difficulty broken by [cavalry].That opinion is corroborated, in addition to many examples ancient and modern, by the authority of those who give rules on civil things, where they show how at first they began to

[322] *Quam mallem vinctos mihi traderent equites*! Livy, XXII 49.
[323] *animo*

make wars with horses, for there was not as yet the order of infantry, but when [the latter] were ordered, it was immediately recognized how much more useful they were than the former. It does not follow from this, however, that horses are not necessary in armies: for scouting, for coursing and pillaging the countryside, for following the enemy when they are in flight, and also in part to oppose the horses of adversaries -- but the foundation and sinew of the army, and what one ought to esteem more, ought to be the infantry.

Among the sins of Italian princes, that have made Italy a slave of foreigners, there is no greater than that of not having kept account of this order, of having turned all concern to militia on horse.This disorder has arisen through the malignity of the heads, and by the ignorance of those who have had state.For since the Italian militia has been reduced in the past twenty-five years to men who have had no state but were like captains of fortune,[324]they immediately thought of how they could maintain their reputation by their being armed and the princes disarmed.Since they could not have continually paid a great number of infantry, and having no subjects of whom they could avail themselves, and since a small number would not give them their reputation, they turned to having horsemen, because two hundred or three hundred horsemen who were paid by a *condottiere* would give him reputation, and the payment was not such that it could not be met by the men who had state.And that this might continue more easily, and the better to maintain their reputation, they took away all the attachment for and the reputation of infantry, concentrating it on their cavalry: and so much did they increase in this disorder that in any of the greatest of armies the smallest part was of infantry.In such a mode, that usage, together with many other disorders that were mixed in with it, made the Italian militia weak, so that this province has been easily trampled on by all the ultramontanes.This error, of esteeming horsemen more than infantry, is shown more openly by one other Roman example.The Romans were encamped before Sora,[325] and, when a swarm of horsemen came out of the town[326] to attack the camp, the master of Roman horse moved to meet them with his knights and, coming abreast, luck had it that in the first encounter the heads of both armies were killed.The others being left without leadership, and the combat nonetheless continuing, the Romans, to overcome the enemy more easily, descended on foot and forced the enemy knights, if they wished to defend themselves, to do the same.With all this the Romans carried off the victory.There cannot be

[324] *capitani di ventura*

[325] The episode Machiavelli here narrates is in fact that of Saticola, which Livy narrates immediately before that of Sora. Livy, IX 22-23.

[326] *terra*

a better example than this to demonstrate how much more virtue there is in infantry than in horsemen, because if in other fights the consuls made the Roman knights descend, it was in order to relieve infantry that were distressed and had need of aid; but in this place they descended, not in order to relieve infantry nor to fight with the enemy's footmen, but, in fighting on horseback with horsemen, they judged, since they could not overcome them on horse, that they could, in descending, more easily defeat them.I therefore wish to conclude that an ordered infantry cannot without the greatest difficulty be overcome except by another infantry. Crassus and Marcus Antonius, Romans, coursed through the dominion of the Parthians many days with very few horse and many infantry and had against them the innumerable horse of the Parthians.Crassus was left there with part of his army, dead.Marcus Antonius saved himself virtuously.Nonetheless in these Roman afflictions one sees how much infantry prevailed over cavalry, for being in a country of great breadth, where mountains are scarce, rivers very scarce, the seas remote, and far from every commodity, nonetheless Marcus Antonius, in the judgment of the Parthians themselves, very virtuously saved himself, nor did all the Parthian cavalry ever dare test the orders of his army.And if Crassus was left there, whoever will read well his actions will see that he was rather deceived than forced, and never, in all his disorders, did the Parthians dare to charge him, but rather always skirting his flanks, impeding his provisions, and making promises to him and not keeping them, they conducted him into an extreme misery.

I would believe that [I] would have to undergo more toil to persuade that the virtue of infantry is more powerful than that of cavalry, if there were not many modern examples that render very full testimony.And one has seen nine thousand Swiss at Novara, which we have alluded to above, go and confront ten thousand cavalry and other infantry, and defeat them, for the cavalry could not harm them; they little esteemed the infantry, since they were for the most part people who were gasconade[327] and badly ordered.One sees afterwards twenty-six thousand Swiss go to find near Milan Francis, king of France, who had twenty thousand cavalry with him, forty thousand infantry, and one hundred caissons of artillery; and if they did not win the battle as they did at Novara, they fought them virtuously for two days and, afterwards, defeated thought they were, they saved half themselves.Marcus Attilius Regulus presumed to resist with his infantry not only horses but also elephants;[328] and if his plan did not succeed, it was not because the virtue of his infantry did not suffice as that he did not have such confidence in it as to

[327] That is, braggarts.
[328] He was defeated by the Carthaginians in 255 B.C., during the First Punic War.

believe that it might overcome that difficulty.I reply, therefore, that to wish to overcome ordered infantry, it is necessary to oppose that infantry with infantry better ordered than they, otherwise one goes to a manifest defeat.In the days of Filippo Visconti, duke of Milan, there descended on Lombardy nearly sixteen thousand Swiss.Whereupon the duke,then having as his captain Carmignuola, sent him with about a thousand cavalry and a few infantry to meet them.[329]Not knowing the order of their fighting, that man went to encounter them with his horse, presuming on his being able immediately to break them.But finding them unmoved, having lost many of his men, he retired; and being a most capable man and, knowing how to grasp new policies with new accidents, re-formed the men, went to find [the enemy] and, coming to battle, he made all his men-at-arms dismount and, on foot, placing them at the head of his infantry, went to invest the Swiss.These had no remedy, for the men-at-arms of Carmignuola being on foot and heavily armed, they could easily enter into the orders of the Swiss without suffering any wounds, and having entered among them they could easily assault them.Such that of all their number only that part remained alive that was preserved by the humanity of Carmignuola.

I believe that many know this difference of virtue between the one and the other of these orders, but so great is the infelicity of these times, that neither ancient nor modern examples nor the confession of the error is sufficient to make modern princes reform themselves, and think that, to wish to render reputation to the militia of a province or a state, it might be necessary to resuscitate these orders, taking them in hand, giving them reputation, giving them life, such that they might render to him life and reputation.And as they deviate from these modes, so do they deviate from the other modes mentioned above; hence it arises that acquisitions bring harm and not greatness to a state, as will be said below.

19. That acquisitions, in republics that are not well-ordered and that do not proceed according to Roman virtue, are to their ruin and not to their exaltation.

These opinions contrary to truth, based on the bad examples that have been introduced in these corrupt centuries of ours, make men not think of deviating from accustomed modes.When would one have been able to persuade one Italian thirty years ago that ten thousand infantry could attack on a plain ten thousand cavalry and other infantry, and not only to fight them with these but defeat them, as one sees by the example of ours, cited many

[329] Battle of Arbedo, July 5, 1522.

times, of Novara?Although histories are full of them, yet no faith is put in them; and if faith would have been put in them, it would have been said that those times were better armed, and that a squadron of men-at-arms would be apt for attacking a rock but not an infantry; and thus with these false excuses they corrupt their judgment, not having considered that Lucullus with few infantry broke one hundred fifty thousand cavalry of Tigranes, and among these knights was one kind of knight wholly like our men-of-arms -- nor how this fallacy has been uncovered by the example of the ultramontane armies.And since one sees by this that what the histories narrate about infantry is true, so should all the other ancient orders be believed to be true and useful.If this would be believed, republics and princes would err less; they would be stronger in resisting an impetus that came upon them, they would not [put] hope in flight; and those that had in their hands a civil life they would know better how to direct it, either by way of expansion or by way of maintaining, and they would believe that increasing the inhabitants of their city, making them companions and not subjects, sending colonies and guarding acquired countries, making capital of booty, subduing the enemy with raids and battles and not with sieges, making the public rich and the private poor, maintaining military exercises with utmost study, would be the true way to make a republic great and to acquire empire.Should this mode of expanding not please them, they should think that acquisitions by any other way are the ruin of a republic, and they would bridle all ambition, regulating their city inside with laws and customs, prohibiting it from acquiring and thinking only of defending itself, and of keeping the defenses well-ordered, as do the republics of Germany, who with these modes live and have lived free for a time.

Nonetheless, as I said at another time when discussing the difference between ordering oneself for acquisition and ordering oneself for maintaining, it is impossible that a republic succeed in staying quiet and enjoying its liberty and its small confines; for if it will not molest others, it will be molested; and from being molested will arise the wish and necessity of acquisition.If there be no enemy outside, it will find one at home, as it seems necessarily happens in all great cities.And if the republics of Germany were able to live in that mode, and have been able to last for a time, that arises from certain conditions that are in that country but not in others, without which they could not have kept such a mode of life.

That part of Germany of which I speak was subject to the Roman Empire, like France and Spain; but coming afterwards into decline, and the title of this Empire having come down to that province, these cities began to be more powerful, according to the vileness or necessity of the emperors,

making themselves free, buying themselves off from the Empire by reserving for it a small annual tribute, such that all these cities that were immediately under the emperor, and were not subjects of another prince, bought themselves off in the same way.It occurred during these same times that these cities bought themselves off, that certain communities subject to the duke of Austria rebelled from him, among whom were Fribourg, and the Swiss, and the like, who, prospering at the beginning, little by little made such augmentations that, not only have they not returned under the yoke of Austria, but have all their neighbors fearing them.And these are the ones who have been called the Swiss.This province then is divided into the Swiss, republics that are called free cities,[330] princes and emperor.The cause that among such diversity of [modes of] life there do not arise wars, or if they do arise they do not last long, is that sign of the emperor, who, though he may have no forces, nonetheless has among them such reputation that he is a conciliator of them, and with his authority, interposing himself as mediator, quickly extinguishes every scandal.The greatest and longest wars there have been are those that have followed between the Swiss and the duke of Austria; and although for many years now the emperor and the duke of Austria have been one and the same thing, he has not therefore ever been able to overcome the audacity of the Swiss, with whom there has never been any mode of accord except through force.Nor has the rest of Germany brought him much aid, both because the communities want nothing to do with attacking those who wish to live as free as they, and because those princes partly cannot, being poor, [and] partly do not wish to, [since they are] envious of his power.These communities can then live content with the smallness of their dominion, by not having cause, with respect to the imperial authority, of desiring it to be greater.They can live united inside their walls, because they have the enemy nearby and [therefore] one who could pick occasions to seize them whenever they might fall into discord.If that province had conditions otherwise, it would be needful for them to expand and break that quiet of theirs.And because there are no such conditions elsewhere, one cannot take this mode of life and one must needs either expand by way of leagues or expand as did the Romans.Whoever governs himself otherwise, looks not to his life but his death and ruin; for in a thousand modes and by many causes acquisitions are harmful, since he is very likely to acquire at one time empire and not forces; and [for] one who acquires empire and not forces at the same time, it must needs be that he falls.He who is impoverished by wars cannot acquire forces, even if he be victorious, for he puts more into than he takes from acquisitions, as the Venetians and Florentines have done;

[330] *terre*

who have been much weaker, since one has had Lombardy and the other Tuscany, than they were when one was content with the sea and the other with six miles of borders.For it all arises from having wished to acquire and not having known how to pick the mode; and so much more do they deserve blame for they have less excuse, having seen the mode the Romans had taken and having been able to follow their example, while the Romans without any example, by their prudence, knew how to find it by themselves.Besides this, acquisitions many times do no ordinary damage to every well-ordered republic, when it has acquired a city or a province full of delights, where it can pick up these customs by the intercourse it has with them, as happened in the acquisition of Capua first to Rome and then afterwards to Hannibal.If Capua had been farther away from the city so that the error of the soldiers would not have had a near-by remedy, or if Rome had been in any way corrupt, without doubt that acquisition would have been the ruin of the Roman republic.And of this Titus Livy bears witness[331] with these words: "Even then not wholesome for military discipline, Capua, a storehouse for every pleasure, turned away the charmed minds of the soldiers from the memory of the fatherland."[332]And truly such-like cities and provinces revenge themselves upon the victor without combat and without blood, for they fill him with their wicked customs and lay him open to be conquered by whoever attacks him.Juvenal in his *Satires* could not have better considered this part, saying that into Roman breasts, through the acquisition of foreign lands,[333] had entered foreign customs,[334] and instead of parsimony and other most excellent virtues, "gluttony and luxury fell upon it, avenging the conquered world."[335] If then acquisition was [in the way of] being pernicious to the Romans in times when these had been proceeding with so much prudence and virtue, what then will it do to those who proceed in modes far removed from theirs, and who, among the other errors they make, [a point] that has been treated at length above, avail themselves of mercenary or auxiliary soldiers?From which there often comes upon them those injuries that will be mentioned in the following chapter.

20. Which danger that prince or republic risks that makes use of auxiliary or mercenary militia.

[331] *fa fede* -- lit., gives faith

[332] *Iam tunc minime salubris militari disciplinae Capua, instrumentum omnium voluptatum, delinitos militum animos avertit a memoria patriae*. Livy, VII 38.

[333] *terre peregrine* -- lit., pilgrim lands or pilgrim walled towns (fortresses).

[334] *i costumi peregrini* -- lit., pilgrim customs.

[335] *gula et luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem* – VI 291-292.

If I had not at length treated in another of my works[336] how useless mercenary and auxiliary militia are and how useful one's own is, I would have extended myself much more in this discourse than I shall; but having spoken on it at length elsewhere I shall be brief in this part.Yet it did not seem to me I should wholly pass it by, having found in Titus Livy so extensive an example as to auxiliary soldiers -- and auxiliary soldiers are those that a prince or a republic sends, captained and paid by him, for your aid.And coming to the text of Livy,[337] I say that the Romans, having in two different places defeated two armies of Samnites with their armies, that had been sent to succour the Capuans and with these freed the Capuans from the war that the Samnites made against them, wishing to return to Rome, and so that the Capuans, stripped of protection, would not become booty for the Samnites, left two legions in the countryside of Capua that might defend them.These legions, rotting in leisure, began to delight in that [city], such that forgetting their fatherland and reverence for the Senate, they thought of taking arms and making themselves lords of the country that they had defended with their virtue, since it seemed to them that the inhabitants were not worthy of possessing those goods that they did not know how to defend. The affair having been foreseen, it was crushed and corrected by the Romans, as will be shown extensively where we shall speak of conspiracies.I say anew, then, among all the qualities of soldiers those of auxiliaries are the most injurious.For that prince or republic that employs them in its aid has no authority whatsoever over them; the only one who has authority is he who has sent them.For auxiliary soldiers are those that you have been sent by a prince, as I have said, under his captains, under his banners, and paid by him, as was this army that the Romans sent to Capua.Such soldiers as these, when they have won, most of the time thus plunder the one who has contracted with them as the one against whom they have been contracted [to come]; and they do it either because of the malignity of the prince who sent them or because of their ambition.Although the intention of the Romans was not to break the agreement and the conventions that they had made with the Capuans, nevertheless it seemed so easy to those soldiers to oppress them that they were persuaded to think of taking the town[338] and the state from the Capuans.One could give many examples of this, but I wish this one to suffice and that of the Rhegini[339] from whom life and the town were taken by a legion that the Romans had placed as a guard.A prince or a republic ought then to adopt any other policy before he resorts to conducting into his state

[336] *Prince*, XII and XIII.
[337] Livy, VII 32,33.
[338] *terra*
[339] i.e., the people of Rhegium.

auxiliary men for his defense, if he has to rely wholly on them; for any pact, any treaty, however hard, he will have with the enemy will be lighter than such a policy.If past things would be read well and present things scrutinized, it will be found that for one that has come to a good end, there have remained countless deceived.A prince or an ambitious republic could not have a better occasion for occupying a city or a province than to be asked to send armies to defend it.Therefore he who is so ambitious that, not only to defend himself but to attack others, calls in such aid, seeks to acquire what he cannot hold and can be easily taken from him by the one who has acquired it.But the ambition of man is so great that to satisfy a present wish, he does not think of the evil that in a short time results from it.As much in this as in the other things discussed, ancient examples do not move him; for if he were moved by them he would see that the more he displays liberality to his neighbors and of his being loath to seize them, the more they throw themselves in his lap, as the example below of the Capuans will show.

21. The first praetor that the Romans sent to any place was to Capua, four hundred years after they began to make war.

How much the Romans were different in their mode of procedure regarding acquisition from those who in present times expand their jurisdiction, has been sufficiently discussed above, as well as how they let those towns that they did not demolish live with their own laws, even those that not as companions but as subjects had surrendered to them, and they left no sign of the empire of the Roman people among these but obligated them to some conditions, which being observed they maintained them intheir state and dignity.These modes were known to have been observed until they went outside Italy and began to reduce kingdoms and states in provinces.[340]

A very clear example of this is that the first praetor that was sent by them to any place was to Capua, whom they sent not because of their ambition but because it had been requested by the Capuans, who, since they were in discord among themselves, judged it necessary to have a Roman citizen enter into that city who would reorder and reunite them.Following this example, the Antiates, moved and constrained by the same necessity, also asked them for a prefect.Titus Livy says on this accident and this new mode of ruling:[341]"For now not only arms but Roman laws were mighty."[342]One sees then how much this mode facilitated Roman augmentation.For those cities, especially those that are used to a free life or are accustomed to govern themselves through their provincials, with more quiet remain content under a dominion they do not see, even if they [experience] some severity from it, than under one which, being seen every day, seems every day to re-prove their servitude to them.Besides, there follows one other good for the prince, since his ministers do not have in hand the judges and magistrates who render criminal and civil justice[343] in those cities, there can never arise a sentence that brings a burden or infamy for the prince; and in this way they come to lack causes for calumny and hatred against him.That this be the truth, among other ancient examples that could be adduced for it, there is one fresh example in Italy.For, as everyone knows, Genoa having been often occupied by the French, that king, except in present times, has always sent a French governor who governed them in his name.Only at present, not by choice of the king but because necessity thus ordered it, he has let that city govern itself

---

[340] *ridurre i regni e gli stati in provincie* -- That is, destroying the kingdoms and states in provinces. See *Prince,* IV.

[341] *imperare*

[342] *Quod iam non solum arma, sed iura romana pollebant*. Livy, IX 20.

[343] *i giudicii ed i magistrii che civilmente o criminalmente rendono ragione* -- lit., the judges and magistrates who civilly or criminally render reasons.

and by a Genoese governor.And without doubt, whoever inquires into which of these two modes brought more security to the king in the rule of that [city], and more contentment to that people, without doubt would approve this last mode. Besides this, men throw themselves the more into your lap, the more you seem loath to take possession of them; and the less they fear you with respect to their liberty, the more [you are] humane and tame with them.Such tameness and liberality made the Capuans run to ask the praetor from the Romans; and if the Romans had shown the least wish to send one, they would immediately have been resentful and kept back from them.But what need is there to go by the examples of Capua and Rome, having them in Florence and Tuscany?Everyone knows how long ago it was that the city of Pistoia came willingly under the Florentine imperium.Everyone also knows how much enmity there has been between the Florentines and Pisani, the Lucchesi and the Sienese, and this diversity of spirit[344] arises not because the Pistoians do not prize their liberty as the others do or that they do not judge themselves [to be as deserving] as others, but by the Florentines having always behaved towards them like brothers, and like enemies to the others.This is what has made the Pistoians run so willingly under their imperium, the others have made and make every effort not to come under it.And without doubt if the Florentines either by way of leagues or by aids had tamed their neighbors and not made them savage, they would without doubt now have been lords of Tuscany.It is not [to be thought] from this that I judge that one should not employ arms and forces, but that they ought to be reserved for the last place where and when other modes do not suffice.

[344] *animo*

22. How false many times are the opinions of men in judging great things.

How false many times are the opinions of men, as those who witness their deliberations have seen and still see, which are often, if they are not deliberated by excellent men, contrary to every truth.Therefore excellent men in corrupt republics, especially in quiet times, by envy and other causes due to ambition, are treated as enemies; and someone is followed who either by a common deception is judged good, or who is put forward by men who wish immediately to have the favors of the universality rather than the good.Afterwards, in adverse times, one discovers this deception, and by necessity one flees to those who in quiet times were forgotten, and this part will be fully discussed in its place.[345]Certain accidents also arise in which men that have no great experience of things are easily deceived, since that accident that arises has in itself, many appearances of truth that help to make believable what human beings have been persuaded [to believe] about such a case.[346]These things have been said because of what Numicius, the praetor, persuaded them after the Latins were defeated by the Romans[347] and because of what many believed a few years ago, when Francis I, king of France, came to acquire Milan, which was defended by the Swiss.I say therefore that Louis XII being dead, and Francis of Angoulême succeeding to the kingdom of France, and desiring to restore the duchy of Milan to the kingdom, which had been occupied by the Swiss a few years before with the encouragement of Pope Julius II, he desired to have help in Italy which would facilitate the enterprise.And besides the Venetians, whom Louis had regained, he tried the Florentines and Leo X, for it seemed to him that his enterprise would be easier whenever he regained these, since the king of Spain had his people in Lombardy, and the emperor had other forces in Verona.Pope Leo did not accede to the wishes of the king, but was persuaded by those who counseled him (according to what has been said) to stay neutral, demonstrating to him that in this policy was contained certain victory; because it did the Church [no good] to have powers in Italy, whether the king or the Swiss, but [that in] wishing to return her to her ancient liberty it was necessary to free her from servitude to both.And because it was impossible to conquer one or the other, either each by itself or both together, it was needful that one overcome the other and that the Church with her friends fall upon the one who was left victorious.It was impossible to find a better occasion than the

[345] III 16, below
[346] *caso* -- also, chance
[347] Livy, VIII 11.

present, since both were in the field and the pope had his forces so ordered that they could place themselves on the confines of Lombardy, near to each army, under color of wishing to guard his affairs, and where he could stay until the battle occurred, which reasonably [could be expected] to be sanguinary for both parties since both armies were virtuous, and [should] therefore leave the victor weakened in such a mode that it would be easy for the pope to attack and defeat him; and thus he would come with his glory to be left lord of Lombardy and the arbiter of all Italy.How false this opinion was one sees by the outcome of the affair. For the Swiss having been overcome after a long fight, the people of the pope and of Spain did not presume to attack the victors, but prepared themselves for flight, which would not even have availed them, had it not been that the king, whether from humanity or coldness, did not seek a second victory, but it sufficed him to come to an accord with the Church.

There are certain reasons for this opinion that from afar seem to be true, but are wholly alien to the truth.For rarely does it happen that the victor loses many of his soldiers, for the victors are not killed in the fight nor in flight, and in the ardor of combat, when men are face-to-face one with the other, few fall, especially because most of the time it does not last long.If indeed it lasts a long time and many of the victors are killed, so great is the reputation that the victory brings after it, and the terror that comes with it, that it goes far beyond the damage that he might have borne from the death of his soldiers.Hence an army that went to meet him with the opinion that he was weakened, would find itself to be deceived, if the army was not already such that at any time, before the victory and after, it was able to fight him. In this case, it could, according to its fortune and virtue, win or lose; but the one who has fought earlier and then had won, would have the advantage rather than the other.This is known to be certain by the experience of the Latins, and by the fallacy held by Numicius the praetor, and by the damage suffered by those people who believed him.The Romans having defeated the Latins, he proclaimed throughout the countryside of Latium that now was the time to attack the Romans, weakened by the combat they had with them, and that only the name of victory remained to the Romans, for they had suffered all the other injuries as if they had been defeated, and that any small force that would attack them anew would dispatch them.Whereupon those peoples who believed him formed a new army, and they were immediately beaten; and they suffered that harm that all those who hold a similar opinion always suffer.[348]

[348] Livy, VIII 11.

23. How much the Romans in judging subjects because of some accident that necessitated such judgment avoided the middle way.

"Now Latium was in such a state of things that it could suffer neither peace nor war."[349] Of all unhappy states the unhappiest is that of a prince or a republic that is reduced to [such] terms that he can neither accept peace or sustain war.To such are reduced those who are much harmed by the conditions of peace, and if they wish to make war, they must needs either throw themselves as booty of those who aid them or that they remain booty of [their] enemies.And to all such terms one comes by bad counsels and bad policies, from not having measured well his forces, as has been said above. For that republic or that prince that measures them well, with difficulty would it be conducted to the terms to which the Latins were conducted.When they ought not have made an agreement with the Romans, they made one, and when they ought not have begun war against them, they began one, and so they knew how to make it such that the friendship and enmity of the Romans were equally damaging to them.The Latins then were conquered and wholly overthrown, first by Manlius Torquatus and then by Camillus; the latter, having constrained them to give themselves up and put themselves back into the arms of the Romans, and having placed a garrison in all the towns of Latium and taking hostages from all of them, returned to Rome and reported to the Senate that all Latium was in the hands of the Roman people.And because this judgment is notable and merits being observed in order to be able to imitate it when similar occasions are given to princes, I wish to adduce the words of Livy put in the mouth of Camillus, that bear witness [both] to the mode that the Romans took in expanding and how in judgments they had always avoided the middle way and turned to extremes.For a government is nothing other than holding subjects in a mode that they cannot or ought not harm you.This is done either by securing oneself there in everything, taking from them every way of hurting you, or by benefiting them in such a mode that it would not be reasonable for them to desire to change fortune.This is all taken up, first by Camillus' proposal, and then by the judgment given by the Senate on it.His words were these:"The immortal gods have given you such power that it has been placed in your hands to decide whether Latium is to exist or not.Therefore, as far as Latium is concerned, you can provide perpetual peace, either by cruelty or by forgiveness.Would you adopt cruel counsels against those who have surrendered and been vanquished?You can annihilate all Latium.Do you want to follow the example of your ancestors and augment the Roman thing,

[349] *Iam Latio in status erat rerum, ut neque pacem neque bellum pati possent.* – Livy, VIII 13.

accepting the vanquished as citizens?Here is matter for growing to highest glory.Certainly that imperium is most secure that is happily obedient.Therefore their spirits must be subjected, with punishments or benefits, while they are bewildered by dreadful expectation."The deliberation of the Senate followed this proposal, which was according to the words of the consul: that all those of importance be brought forward town by town and they either benefited them or extinguished them -- granting the benefited exemptions, privileges, giving them the city and assuring them in every part.As for the others, they destroyed the towns and sent colonies there, bringing [their people] to Rome and dispersing them in such a way that they could no longer do harm with arms and counsel.Nor did they ever use the neutral way, as I said, in those [affairs] of importance.This judgment princes ought to imitate.And this the Florentines ought to have adhered to when in 1502 Arezzo rebelled, and all of the Valdichiana.If they had done this, they would have secured their imperium, and have made the city of Florence very great, and [it would have] given them that countryside for their sustenance which they lacked.But they adopted that middle way which is most harmful in judging men,[350] for they exiled part of the Aretines, condemned part, and took away from them all their former honors and ranks in the city, and left the city whole.And if some citizen in the deliberations had counseled that Arezzo be destroyed, those who seemed to be wiser said that it would be of little honor to the republic to demolish it, for it would appear that Florence lacked the forces to hold them.Such reasons as these appear to be true and are not; for with this same reason one would not be able to kill a parricide, a wicked and scandalous man, since it would be shameful for that prince to reveal that he did not have the forces that could bridle a single man.Those who hold similar opinions do not see that sometimes when men, individually, and an entire city together, sin against a state that for the example of others and for security to himself a prince has no other remedy than to extinguish it.And honor consists in being able and knowing how to punish it, not in being able to hold it with a thousand dangers.For the prince who does not punish one who errs, in a mode that he is not able to err more, is held to be ignorant or cowardly. How necessary was the judgment that the Romans gave is also confirmed by the sentence they gave to the Privernates.Whence one ought note two things by the text of Livy:the one, what was said above, that subjects ought to be benefited or extinguished; the other, how much generosity of spirit,[351] how much speaking the truth, helps, when it is said in the presence of prudent men.The

[350] That is, in passing judgment as to penalties they are to suffer.
[351] *animo*

Roman Senate had gathered to judge the Privernates, who, having rebelled, were then by force returned to Roman obedience.The people of Privernum had sent many citizens to impetrate pardon from the Senate, and these having come into its presence, one of them was asked by one of the Senators:"What punishment he reckoned the Privernates merited."[352]To which the Privernate responded: "What they merit who reckon themselves worthy of liberty."[353]To which the consul replied: "What if we remitted the penalty to you, what peace might we hope to have from you."[354]To which he responded: "If you give a good one, loyal and perpetual; if bad, not at all lasting."[355]Whereupon the wiser part of the Senate, although many were angry, said:"The voice of the free and manly was heard, and one cannot believe that any people, or even a man, could abide in a painful condition longer than is necessary.And that peace would be sure where they willingly made peace, while they could not possibly hope for loyalty from those where they had imposed servitude."[356]On these words, they deliberated that the Privernates be made Roman citizens and honored with the privileges of the city,[357] saying:"That only those who thought of nothing except of liberty are worthy to be made Romans."[358]So pleasing to generous spirits[359] was this true and generous reply, for every other reply would have been deceitful and cowardly.Those who judge otherwise of human beings, especially of those who are used to being or seem to themselves to be free, deceive themselves, and under this deception pick policies not good in themselves and of no satisfaction to them.From which arise many rebellions and the ruin of states.But in order to return to our discourse I conclude, both because of this and of the judgment pronounced on the Latins, that when one has to judge powerful cities that have been used to living free, one must either extinguish them or caress them, every other judgment is vain.One ought wholly avoid the middle way, which is damaging, as it was to the Samnites when they had enclosed the Romans at the Caudine Forks, and they did not wish to follow the opinion of that old man who counseled that they should either let the

---

[352] *Quam poenam meritos Privernates censeret.*
[353] *Eam quam merentur qui se libertate dignos censent.*
[354] *Quid si poenam remittimus vobis, qualem nos pacem vobiscum habiturus speremus?*
[355] *Si bonam dederitis, et fidelem et perpetuam; si malam, haud diuturnam.*
[356] *Se audisse vocem et liberi et viri, nec credi posse ullum populum, aut hominem denique in ea conditione cuius eum poenitat, diutius quam necesse sit, mansurum. Ibi pacem esse fidam, ubi volunatrii pacati sint, neque eo loco ubi servitutem esse velint, fidem sperandam esse.* – Livy, VIII 21.
[357] *e de' privilegi della civiltà gli honorarono.*
[358] *Eos demum qui nihil praeterquam de libertate cogitant, dignos esse qui Romani fiant.*
[359] *animi*

Romans go honored or that they should kill all of them.[360]But taking a middle way, disarming them and passing them under the yoke, they let them go filled with shame and indignation.Such that a little later they knew to their damage that the judgment of the old man had been useful and their deliberation damaging, as I shall discuss more fully in its place.[361]

24. Fortresses generally are more damaging than useful.

It will appear to those wise men of our times a thing not well-considered that the Romans, in wishing to assure themselves of the peoples of Latium and the city of Privernum,[362] did not think of building there some fortresses, that would be a bridle to keep them faithful; especially since there is a saying in Florence, cited by our wise men, that Pisa and other similar cities ought to be held with fortresses.And truly if the Romans had been made like them, they would have thought of building them; but since they were of a different virtue, of different judgment, of different power, they did not build them.While Rome lived free and followed her orders and her virtuous institutions,[363] she never built them in order to keep either cities or provinces, but did save some of those [already] built.Whence having seen the mode of procedure of the Romans in this part, and those of the princes of our times, it seems to me [one ought] to give consideration to whether it is good to build fortresses, and whether they are harmful or useful to one who builds them.It ought to be considered then that fortresses are made either to defend oneself against enemies or to defend oneself against subjects.In the first case, they are not necessary, in the second damaging.To begin to render reason why, in the second case, they are damaging, I say to that prince, or that republic, who fears his subjects and their rebellion, first, that this fear must arise from the hatred that his subjects have for him, that hatred from his evil conduct -- [and] that evil conduct arises from either believing that one is able to hold them with force or from the little prudence of the one who governs them.One of the things that makes him believe that he is able to force them is to have fortresses on their backs; for the ill-treatment that is the cause of hatred arises in good part from that prince or republic having fortresses, which, when this is true, are by far more injurious than useful.For, first, as has been said, they make you more audacious and more violent with subjects; and then [they do not provide] that security within as you persuade yourself -- for all the forces, all the violence, that have been used to hold

[360] Livy, IX 3.
[361] III 40-42.
[362] Livy, VIII 20.
[363] *constitutizioni* -- lit., constitutions

down a people are nothing except for two: either you are always able to put a good army in the field, as the Romans did; or you disperse them, extinguish them, disorder and disunite them in such a mode that they are not able to come together to attack you.For if you impoverish them, "arms are left to the despoiled;"[364] and if you disarm them, "Fury furnishes arms."[365]If you kill heads, and go on to injure the others, heads rise up like those of the Hydra.If you make fortresses, they are useful in times of peace, because they make you more spirited in doing them ill; but in times of war they are most useless, because they are assaulted by the enemy and by subjects, and it is not possible that they can resist both.If ever they were useless, they are in our times because of artillery, against the fury of which it is impossible to defend small places and those where it is not possible to retreat into embankments, as we have discussed above.[366]

I wish on this matter to dispute it more minutely.Either you, prince, wish with these fortresses to keep a bridle on the people of your city; or you, prince or republic, wish to bridle a captured city with war.I wish to turn myself to the prince, and I say to him that these fortresses to hold in bridle one's citizens cannot be more useless for the causes said above.For it makes you more prompt and less respectful of oppressing them, and that oppression makes them so disposed to your ruin and they are inflamed in such a mode that that fortress which is the cause of it is then not able to defend you.Such that a wise and good prince, in order to keep himself good, in order not to give cause or encourage his sons to become wicked, will never make a fortress, so that these will found themselves not on fortresses but on the goodwill of men.If Count Francesco Sforza, having become duke of Milan, was reputed to be wise and nonetheless made a fortress in Milan, I say that in this he was not wise, and its effect has demonstrated how that fortress was to the damage and not the security of his heirs.For judging because of it that they lived securely and could harm their citizens and subjects, they lost [no opportunity] for every kind of violence.Such that becoming beyond every mode hated, they lost that state as soon as an enemy attacked them.That fortress did not defend them nor was it of any use in the war, and in peace it had done them much damage.For if they had not had it, and if with little prudence they had harshly administered their citizens, they would have discovered the danger more quickly and they would have drawn back, and they would have been able more spiritedly to resist the French impetus without the fortress and with friendly subjects, than with the fortress and

[364] *spoliatis arma supersunt* -- Juvenal, *Satires,* VIII 124.
[365] *furor arma ministrat* -- Virgil, *Aeneid,* I 50.
[366] *D* II 17, above.

hostile [subjects].[Fortresses] do not avail you in any part, for they are either lost by the treachery of those who guard them, or by the violence of those who attack them, or by hunger.If you wish them to be of help to you in aiding you to recover a lost state where the fortress alone is left to you, you must have an army with which you can attack the one who has chased you out; and if you have this army, you regain the state in every mode, and the fortress might as well not be there; and so much more easily for men will be friendlier to you than they would be after having been ill treated by you because of the pride of the fortress.And by experience one has seen that this fortress of Milan, neither for the Sforzas nor for the French, when times were adverse to either, has been of no use to any of them; on the contrary, it has brought down on all much harm and ruin, by not having thought because of it of a more honest mode of holding that state. Guidobaldo, duke of Urbino, son of Federigo, who in his times was much esteemed as a captain, having been chased out by Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, from his state, when, later, it came about through an accident that he returned, had all the fortresses that were in the province dismantled, judging them to be damaging.For with regard to his men, since he was loved by them, he did not wish to have [fortresses] on their account; and as to the enemy, he saw that he could not defend these [fortresses], since they had need of an army in the field to defend them -- thus he turned to dismantling them.Pope Julius, having driven the Bentivogli from Bologna, built a fortress in that city, and afterwards had that people assassinated by one who was his governor.That people then rebelled and he lost the fortress immediately, and thus the fortress did not help and harmed him; although, if he had behaved differently, it would have helped him. Niccolò da Castello, father of the Vitelli, returned to his fatherland whence he had been exiled, immediately undid two fortressesthat Pope Sixtus IV had built, judging that not the fortress but the goodwill of the people would have to keep him that state.But of all the examples the freshest and most notable in every part, and most apt for showing the uselessness of building [fortresses] and the usefulness of dismantling them, is that of Genoa which occurred in very recent times.Everyone knows how in 1507 Genoa rebelled against Louis XII, king of France, who came personally and with all his forces to reacquire it; and when it had been re-taken, he made a fortress the strongest of all those of which we presently have knowledge; because it was by situation and by every other circumstance inexpugnable, placed on the point of a hill that extended into the sea, called by the Genoese the Codefà; and with this commanded all the port and the greater part of the city of Genoa. It then came about that in 1512, the French hosts having been chased out of Italy,

Genoa, notwithstanding the fortress, rebelled; and the state was taken by that Ottaviano Fregoso, who with every industry within sixteen months captured it through famine.Everyone believed, and many counseled it, that he ought preserve it as his refuge in every accident; but he, as a most prudent man, knowing that not fortresses but the will of men kept princes in state, destroyed it.Thus without founding his state on the fortress but on his virtue and prudence, he has kept and keeps it.And where to change the state of Genoa a thousand infantrymen usually sufficed, his adversaries have assaulted him with ten thousand and have not been able to harm him.One sees then by this that the dismantling of the fortress did not harm Ottaviano and the making of it did not defend the king.For when he could come into Italy with an army, he could recover Genoa without having a fortress there; but when he could not come into Italy with an army, he could not hold Genoa though he had a fortress there.It was then expensive for the king to make it and shameful to lose it; for Ottaviano it was glorious to reacquire it and useful to destroy it.

But let us come to republics that made fortresses not in their fatherlands but in towns that they acquire.To show this fallacy, if the example given of France and Genoa will not suffice, I wish that of Florence and Pisa to suffice me, for the Florentines made fortresses in order to hold that city, and did not know that with a city that had always been hostile to the Florentine name, had lived free, and in rebellion had liberty as a refuge, it was necessary, wishing to hold it, to observe the Roman mode, and either make it a companion or destroy it.For the virtue of fortresses might be seen in the coming of King Charles, to whom they were given either because of the little faith of those who guarded them, or because of fear of greater evil.Whence if they had not been, the Florentines would have founded the power of holding Pisa on them, and that king would not have been able through this way to deprive the Florentines of that city.The modes with which they had held it until that time would perchance have been sufficient to preserve it, and without doubt they would not have made a much worse result than did fortresses.I conclude then that in order to keep one's own fatherland, that a fortress is damaging; in order to keep towns that have been acquired, fortresses are useless.And I wish the authority of the Romans to suffice me, who in the towns they wished to hold with violence, they unwalled them and did not build walls.If against this opinion anyone should allege to me Tarentum in ancient times, and in modern ones Brescia, as places that by means of fortresses were recovered from rebellious subjects, I respond that as to the recovery of Tarentum, Fabius Maximus with all his army was sent at the end of one year, which would have been able to recover

it even though there would have been no fortress.And though Fabius used that way, if it had not been there he would have used another that would have had the same effect.I do not know of what use a fortress might have in restoring a town to you if for its recovery one needs a consular army and a Fabius Maximus as captain.That the Romans would have re-taken it in any case, one sees by the example of Capua, where there was no fortress -- and by the virtue of the army they reacquired it.[367]But let us come to Brescia. I say that rarely does it happen what happened in that rebellion, that the fortress remains [as part of] your forces, the town having rebelled, and you have a very large and near-by army, as was that of the French.For since Monseigneur de Foix, the king's captain, was with the army at Bologna, when he heard of the loss of Brescia, without delay he went off at that moment and in three days arrived at Brescia, and by means of the fortress retook the town. Even therefore the fortress of Brescia, to wish that it might be of use, had need of a Monseigneur de Foix and a French army that in three days relieved it.So that this example over against the contrary examples does not suffice, for in the wars of our times many fortresses have been taken and retaken with the same fortune with which the [open] countryside is retaken and taken, not only in Lombardy, but in the Romagna, the kingdom of Naples, and in all parts of Italy.But as to the building of fortresses in order to defend oneself from outside enemies, I say that they are not necessary for those people and those kingdoms that have good armies, and for those who do not have good armies they are useless; for good armies without fortresses are sufficient for defending themselves, fortresses without good armies cannot defend you.And one sees this by experience of those that have been held to be excellent in government and in other things, as one sees of the Romans and the Spartans.For if the Romans did not build fortresses, the Spartans not only abstained from them, but did not permit other cities to have walls, for they wished the virtue of the individual man, not any other defense, to defend them.Thus when a Spartan was asked by an Athenian if the walls of Athens seemed beautiful to him, he answered: "Yes, if they were inhabited by women."[368]If then a prince then who has good armies has on the seacoast and on the frontier of his state some fortress that could for some days resist the enemy until he was in order -- it would be a useful thing, sometimes, but it is not necessary.But when the prince does not have a good army, to have fortresses in his state or on the frontiers is either harmful or useless.Harmful because he easily loses them, and when lost they make war against him; or they are so strong that the enemy cannot take them, and they are left behind

[367] Livy, XXV 7-11; XXVI 39; XXVII 15-16, 20, 25.
[368] Plutarch, *Moralia,* III*, Sayings of Spartans*, 215DE.

by the enemy army and are fruitless.For good armies, when they have no very robust resistance, enter into enemy countries without respect for cities or fortresses that they leave behind them, as one sees in ancient histories and as one saw Francesco Maria do, who, in recent times, in order to assault Urbino, left behind ten enemy cities without any respect.That prince then who can put together a good army, can do so without building fortresses; he who does not have a good army ought not build them.He should strengthen well the city where he lives, to keep it armed and its citizens well-disposed, in order to be able so to resist an enemy attack [until] either an accord or external aid frees him.All other plans are expensive in times of peace and useless in times of war.And thus he who will consider all that I have said, will know that the Romans, being wise in all their other orders, were therefore prudent in this judgment of the Latins and Privernates, when, not thinking of fortresses, with more virtuous modes and wiser they assured themselves of them.

25. That to attack a disunited city, in order to seize it through its disunion, is bad policy.

There was such disunion in the Roman Republic between the plebs and the nobility that the Veientians, together with the Etruscans, thought that they could extinguish the Roman name through that disunion.Having put together an army and pillaged the fields of Rome, the Senate sent against them Gaius Manilius and Marcus Fabius.[369]When theyconducted their army next to the army of the Veientes, the Veieintians did not cease with their attacks and insults to offend and vituperate the name of Rome.So great was their temerity and insolence that the Romans from being disunited became united, and coming to blows they broke and defeated them.One sees therefore how much men deceive themselves, as we have discussed above, in taking up policies, and how many times they believe to gain a thing and they lose it.The Veientes believed that when they attacked the disunited Romans that they would defeat them, and that attack was the cause of the union of the Romans and their ruin; for the cause of disunion in republics most of the time is leisure[370] and peace, the cause of union is fear and war.Therefore had the Veientians been wise, the more disunited they saw Rome to be, the more they should have kept war distant from it, and sought to oppress them with the arts of peace.The mode is to seek to become the confidant of the

[369] Livy, II 44-47.
[370] *ozio* -- also, laziness.

city that is disunited, and as long as they do not come to arms, to manage oneself as an arbiter between the parties.And if they come to arms, to give slow favors to the weakest part, both to keep them more in the war and make them consume themselves, because large forces might make all of them doubt that you wish to oppress them and become their prince.When this part has been governed well, it will almost always come about that you will have that end that you had put before you.The city of Pistoia, as I said in another discourse[371] and on another topic, came under the Republic of Florence by no other art than this, for that city being divided, and the Florentines favoring now one side and now the other, without vexing either, led it to such terms that, torn by its tumultuous life, it came spontaneously to throw itself into the arms of Florence.The city of Siena has never changed state with the favor of the Florentines, except when the favors have been weak and few. For when they have been many and vigorous, they have united that city in the defense of the state that rules.I wish to add to the above-written one other example. Filippo Visconti, duke of Milan, made war many times against the Florentines based on their disunion, and he always was left the loser.Such that he would say, bewailing his enterprises, that the madnesses of the Florentines had made him uselessly spend two millions of gold.Therefore as I have said above, the Veientes and Tuscans remained deceived by this opinion, and they were finally overcome in one battle by the Romans.And thus it will happen to anyone who will remain deceived in a similar way and for a similar cause believing [he can] oppress a people.

26. Contempt and abuse generate hatred against those who use them, without any utility to them.

I believe it to be one of the great prudences that men use, to abstain themselves either from menacing or injuring someone with words, for neither one or the other takes forces from the enemy, but one makes him more cautious, and the other makes him more greatly hate you and [he] thinks with greater industry [of] how to hurt you.One sees this in the example of the Veientes, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, who to the injury of war against the Romans added the opprobrium of words; from which every prudent captain should make his soldiers abstain, for these are things that inflame and kindle the enemy to vengeance; and in no part, as I said, do they impede him in the attack, such that they are all arms that come against you.Of this there once followed a notable example in

[371] *D* II 21.

Asia, where Gabade, captain of the Persians,[372] having been encamped before Amida a long time decided, worn out by the tedium of the siege, to depart.He had already lifted camp when those in the town all came on to the walls, elated with victory; they did not spare themselves from any quality of injury, reviling, accusing and reproving the enemy for cowardice and laziness.Gabade was irritated by this, changed his plan, and returned to the siege.So great was his indignation at the injury that in a few days he took and sacked them.And this same thing happened to the Veientes, for whom, as I have said, it did not suffice to make a war against the Romans but they also reviled them with words, going up to the stockade of the camp to say their insults, irritating them more with words that with arms; and those soldiers that earlier had fought unwillingly, constrained the Consuls to start the combat; so that the Veientes bore the penalty, as did the aforesaid, of their contumacy.[373]Hence good princes of armies and good governors of republics have to take every opportune remedy that these injuries and reproaches not be used by either their city or army, neither amongst themselves nor against the enemy.For if used against the enemy there succeeds the above-written inconveniences; amongst themselves they would make for [something] worse, not providing against them, as prudent men have always provided.The Roman legions left in Capua having conspired against the Capuans, as in its place will be narrated,[374] and there having arisen a sedition out of this conspiracy, which was then quieted by Valerius Corvinus; among other constitutions in the agreement made they ordered very heavy penalties for those who would ever reprove any of the seditious soldiers.[375]Tiberius Gracchus, who, in the war against Hannibal, was made captain over a certain number of slaves whom the Romans, because of the lack of men, had armed, ordered among the first things capital punishment for anyone who would reprove the servitude of any of them.[376] The Romans so esteemed as an injurious thing, as was said above, to hold men in contempt and to reproach them for some disgrace, for there is nothing that so kindles their spirits[377] or generates greater indignation, whether it is said in truth or jestingly:"For pungent jokes, when they are drawn too much from the truth, leave a bitter memory."[378]

---

[372] Cobades. Narrated in Procopius' *History of the Wars of Justinian*.
[373] Livy, II 43-45.
[374] III 6, below.
[375] Livy, VII 38-42.
[376] Livy, XXIII 35.
[377] *animi*
[378] *Nam facetiae asperae, quando nimium ex vero traxere, acrem sui memoriam reliquunt.* -- Tacitus, *Annals*, XV 68.

27.For prudent princes and republics it should suffice to win; because most times when it does not suffice one loses.

The use of disparaging words against the enemy arises most times from an insolence that is given you by either victory or the false hope of victory.Such false hope makes men err not only in speaking but also in working.For this hope when it enters into the breasts of men makes them pass the mark[379] and lose most of the time that occasion of having a certain good, hoping to have an uncertain better.And because this is a terminus[380] that merits consideration, for men often deceive themselves and with harm to their state, and it seems to me that it [ought] be demonstrated particularly with examples ancient and modern, since one cannot so distinctly demonstrate it with reasons.Hannibal, after he had defeated the Romans at Cannae, sent his ambassadors to Carthage to make known the victory and ask for subsidies.It was disputed in the Senate as to which it had to do.Hanno, an old and prudent Carthaginian citizen, advised that this victory be used wisely to make peace with the Romans, which it could have with honest conditions, having won, and not wait to have to make it after defeat.[381]For the intention of the Carthaginians ought to be to show the Romans that they sufficed to fight them, and having had victory [the Senate ought] not to seek to lose it by the hope of a greater.This part was not taken, but the Carthaginian Senate indeed came later to know it as wise when the occasion had been lost. Alexander the Great having already taken the whole of the East, the republic of Tyre, noble in those times and powerful because of having their city on water like the Venetians, saw the greatness of Alexander and sent him ambassadors to tell him how they wish to be his good servants, and to give him that obedience he wished, but that they were not ready to accept either him or his people in the town.[382]Whence Alexander, indignant that a city would wish to close those gates that the whole world had opened, threw them out, did not accept their conditions and went to lay siege.[383]The town was on water,[384] and very well provided with the victuals and other munitions necessary for defense, so that Alexander after four months saw that one city had to its glory taken from him more time than all the many other acquisitions had taken him, and he decided to attempt an accord and to

---

[379] *passare il segno*
[380] *termine* -- also limit or boundary
[381] Livy, XXIII 11-13.
[382] *terra*
[383] Quintus Curtius, IV 2-4.
[384] *la terra in acqua* -- lit., the land was in water.

concede to them what they themselves had requested.But those in Tyre, having become proud, not only did not wish to accept the accord but killed the one who came to make it.Whereupon Alexander, becoming indignant, put himself with such force to the siege that he took and demolished it, and killed and made slaves of the men.[385]

In 1512 a Spanish army came into the Florentine dominion in order to reinstate the Medici in Florence and levy a tax on the city, conducted there by citizens from within, who had given them hope that as soon as they were in the Florentine dominion, they would take up arms in their favor.And having entered into the plain and not finding anyone, and having a scarcity of victuals, they tried for an accord; the people of Florence made proud by this did not accept it.Whence came the loss of Prato and the ruin of that state.

Princes who are attacked, then, cannot make a greater error, when the attack is made by men who by far are more powerful than they, than to refuse any accord, especially when it is offered to them; because what is offered will never be so low that there would not be in some part the good of he who accepts it, and there will be a share of his victory.[386]For it should have sufficed the people of Tyre that Alexander accepted those conditions that he had at first rejected, and it was a great victory that was theirs, when with arms in hand they had made so great a man yield to their will.It should also have sufficed the Florentine people, for it was for them a great victory if the Spanish army ceded to any of their wishes and did not carry out all of theirs.For the intention of that army was to change the state in Florence, remove it from the devotion to France, and take money from it.When of three things [the Spanish army] would have had two, the last two, and to the people one was left, which was the preservation of their state, there was for those within some honor and some satisfaction.The people ought never have minded these two things, since they remained alive; nor ought they have wished, when they had seen a greater victory indeed and an almost certain one, to give some part to the discretion of fortune, playing their last stake, which no one prudent ever will risk except when necessitated.Hannibal having left Italy, where he had been sixteen glorious years, recalled by his Carthaginians to succour the fatherland, he found Hasdrubal and Syphax beaten, found the kingdom of Numidia lost, and Carthage confined to the limits of her walls, with no other refuge than he and his army.[387]Knowing that the army was the last stake of his fatherland, he did not wish to place it at risk before he had tried every other remedy; and he was not ashamed to ask

[385] *gli uomini* -- lit., the human beings.
[386] That is, a share in the victory of the more powerful.
[387] Livy, XXX 9, 19-20, 29-31.

for peace, judging that if his fatherland had any remedy, it was in that and not in war.The [request] being then denied, he did not wish to avoid combat, though he should lose, judging that he might still win, or in losing lose gloriously.And if Hannibal, who was so virtuous and had his army intact, sought peace rather than battle when he saw that in losing his fatherland would become a slave, what ought to be done by another with less virtue and less experience than he?But men make this error, that they do not know how to place limits on their hopes, and founding themselves on these, without otherwise measuring themselves, they are ruined.

28. How dangerous it is to a republic or to a prince not to avenge an injury made against the public or against the private.

That which indignation in men makes them do is easily known by what happened to the Romans when they sent the three Fabii as spokesmen[388] to the French who had come to attack Tuscany and, in particular, Chiusi.For the people of Chiusi having sent to Rome for aid against the French, the Romans sent ambassadors[389] to the French, who, in the name of the Roman people, were to make known to them that they should abstain from making war against the Tuscans.The spokesmen being there in place and more fit to act than speak, when the French and the Tuscans came to battle, they put themselves in the forefront to fight against [the French].Whence it arose that, being recognized by them, all the indignation they had against the Tuscans turned against the Romans.That indignation became great, for the French through their ambassadors having complained to the Roman Senate of that injury, and having demanded that in satisfaction of the harm they should be given the above-written Fabii -- not only were they not consigned to them or in some other mode punished, but when elections came they were made Tribunes with consular power.Such that when the French saw those honored who ought to have been punished, they took it all to have been done for their contempt and ignominy; and, filled with indignation and rage, they came to attack Rome and took her except for the Capitol.That ruin came upon the Romans only because of the inobservance of justice, because their ambassadors having sinned "against the law of nations"[390] ought to have been punished, [but instead] they were honored.Therefore one should consider how much every republic and every prince ought to take account of making similar injury, not

[388] *oratori*
[389] *ambasciatori*
[390] *avendo peccato i loro ambasciatori "contra jus gentium."*

only against a universality but even against an individual.For if one man is harmed greatly either by the public or the private, and there be no vengeance to his satisfaction: if he lives in a republic he seeks, even with its ruin, to avenge himself; if he lives under a prince, and has some generosity in himself, he will never be quiet until he avenges himself in some mode against [the prince], even if he sees in it evil for himself.

In order to verify this there is no more beautiful nor a truer example than that of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander.He had in his court Pausanias, a beautiful and noble youth, of whom Attalus was enamored, one of the first men who were near to Philip; and since [Attalus] had asked many times that [Pausanias] give consent to him and finding that he was averse to such-like things, [Attalus] deliberated to have with deception and by force what he saw that he could not have by another way.And he gave a solemn banquet to which Pausanias and many other noble barons were invited; after everyone was full of drink and wine, he took Pausanias and, having him bound, not only gave vent to his lust by force, but also for greater ignominy had him disgraced in the same mode by many others.Pausanias complained of this injury many times to Philip, who, having for a time kept him in hope of his being avenged, not only did not avenge him but placed [Attalus] at the head of the government of a province of Greece.Whence Pausanias, seeing his enemy honored and not punished, turned all his indignation not against the one who had done him injury, but against Philip, who had not avenged him.One solemn morning, on the wedding day of the daughter of Philip, whom he had married to Alexander of Epirus, Philip going to the temple to celebrate it in between the two Alexanders, son-in-law and son, [Pausanias] killed him.[391]This example is very similar to that of the Romans, and notable for anyone who governs: that one ought never so little esteem a man as to believe, that when injury is added to injury, that he who is injured would not think of avenging himself with every danger and particular harm to himself.

29. Fortune blinds the minds[392] of men when she does not wish that they oppose themselves to her designs.

If one will consider well how human things proceed, one will see many times things arise and accidents come that the heavens have wished wholly not to be provided for.If this of which I speak occurred in Rome, where there was such virtue, such religion and such order, it is no marvel that it occurs very often in a city or in a province that lacks the things said

[391] Justin, IX 6.
[392] *animi*

above.And because this place is very noteworthy for demonstrating the potency of heaven over human things, Titus Livy at length and with most efficacious words demonstrates it -- saying how heaven, wishing to whatever end, that the Romans acknowledge its potency, first made those Fabii err who went as spokesmen[393] to the French, and by means of their work incited them to make war against Rome; then afterwards ordered that nothing was done in Rome worthy of the Roman people to put down that war -- having first ordained that Camillus, who could have been the one only remedy against such great ill, be sent into exile in Ardea.Afterwards, when the French came towards Rome those who, in order to meet the attack of the Volscians and other of their environing enemies, had many times created a Dictator, with the French coming they did not create one.Also, in the choice of soldiers, they made it feebly and without any extraordinary diligence.And they were so sluggish in taking up arms, that they were hard-pressed to meet the French in time on the River Allia, ten miles distant from Rome.There the Tribunes set up their camp without any of the customary diligence, not viewing the place beforehand and not surrounding it with a ditch and stockade, not using any remedy human and divine.In ordering the combat they gave the orders seldom and feebly, in such a mode that neither the soldiers nor the captains did anything worthy of Roman discipline.They then fought without any blood; for they fled before they were attacked, and the greater part went to Veii, the others retreated to Rome, these, without otherwise entering their homes, entered into the Capitol; in such a mode that the Senate without thinking of defending Rome, did nothing other than not to shut the gates. Some fled, some entered into the Capitol with the others.Still, in defending it, they used some order not tumultuously; for they did not burden it with useless people, bringing in there all the grain that they could so that they might sustain the siege; and of the useless crowd of old men, of women and children, the greater part fled to the surrounding towns, and the remainder stayed in Rome a prey to the French.Such that he who had read of the things done by that people for so many years before, and who then read of those times, could not in any mode believe that it was one and the same people.And Titus Livy, having spoken on all the aforesaid disorders, concludes by saying:"To such an extent does fortune blinds men's minds, when she does not wish them to check the course of her power."[394]Nor can this conclusion be more true.Hence men who live ordinarily in great adversity or prosperity merit less praise or less blame.For most times one will see them to have been induced to ruin or greatness by a great advantage that

[393] *oratori*

[394] *Adeo obcoecat animos fortuna, cum vim suam ingruentem refringi non vult.* Livy, V 37.

the heavens have given them, either giving them the occasion for being able to work virtuously or taking it away from them.

Fortune does this well: she elects a man, when she wishes to conduct great things, who is of such spirit[395] and such virtue that he recognizes these occasions that she puts before him.Thus, in the same way, when she wishes to [bring about][396] great ruin, she puts men at the top who aid that ruin.And if there might be anyone who could hinder it, either she kills him or deprives him of all the faculties of being able to work any good.One knows this very well from this text, how fortune in order to make Rome more considerable and conduct her to that coming greatness, judged that it was necessary to thrash her (as will be discussed at length at the beginning of the following book) but not indeed to wish wholly to ruin her.And because of this one sees that she made Camillus be exiled but not killed, she made Rome to be taken but not the Capitol, ordered that the Romans not think of anything good in defending Rome, and then omit no good order in defending the Capitol.She brought about, that Rome might be taken, that the greater part of the soldiers who had been routed at Allia go on to Veii, and thus removed all the ways of defending the city of Rome.And in doing this she prepared everything for her recovery, having conducted an intact Roman army to Veii and Camillus to Ardea, to be able to build itself up to great strength[397] under a captain not stained with any ignominy from the defeat and intact in his reputation for the recovery of his fatherland.One could adduce in confirmation of the things said some modern example; but judging these not to be necessary, since this can satisfy anyone, they shall be omitted.I affirm anew indeed it is very true, according to what is seen in all the histories, that men are able to second fortune but not oppose her; they can weave her warps but not break them.They ought never then give up; for not knowing her end, and going by dark and unknown ways, they should always hope, and in hoping not give up, in whatever fortune and whatever travail they may find themselves.

30. Republics and princes truly powerful do not buy friendships with money, but with virtue and the reputation of forces.

The Romans were besieged in the Capitol, and although they awaited the succour of Veii and Camillus, driven by hunger they came to a composition with the French to redeem themselves with a certain quantity of

[395] *spirito*
[396] *condurre* -- lit., to conduct.
[397] *da potere fare grossa testa* -- lit., to be able to build to a great head.

gold; and while weighing the gold according to the agreement, Camillus suddenly appeared with his army; which, the historian says, fortune did, "that the Romans would not live redeemed by gold."[398]This thing not only is notable in this part [of Livy's text], but even in the proceedings of [all] the actions of this Republic, wherein one sees that they never acquired towns[399] with money, never made peace with money, but always with the virtue of arms.I do not believe that this has happened with any other republic.And among the other signs by which one knows the potency of a strong state, is to see how it lives with its neighbors, and when it governs itself in such a mode that the neighbors, to have it as a friend, are its tributaries, then it is a sure sign that that state is powerful.But when the said neighbors, though inferior to it, draw money from it, then that is a great sign of its weakness.

Read all the Roman histories, and you will see how the Massilians,[400] the Aedui,[401] the Rhodians,[402] Hiero the Syracusan,[403] the kings Eumenes[404] and Masinissa,[405] who were all neighbors on the confines of the Roman imperium, in order to have its friendship concurred in payments and tributes for its needs, not seeking from it any other recompense than that it defend them.One will see the contrary in weak states, and beginning with ours of Florence, in times past, during [the period of] its greatest reputation, there was no little lord in the Romagna who did not have a subsidy from it, and it gave the more to the Perugians, the Castellani, and all its other neighbors.If this city had been armed and strong it would have all gone to the contrary; for many in order to have its protection would have given money to it and sought to buy its friendship, not to sell their own.Nor have the Florentines lived alone in this vileness, but also the Venetians and the king of France, who, with so great a kingdom, lives tributary to the Swiss and the king of England.This all arises from his having disarmed his peoples, and having wished more that the king and the others previously named enjoy the present advantage of being able to pillage peoples, [and of being able] to avoid an imagined more than a true danger, [instead] of doing the things that might secure them and make their states happy *in perpetuo*.This disorder if it brings forth at times some quiet, is with time a cause of necessity, of injuries and irremediable ruin.And it would take long to recount how many times the

---

[398] *ut Romani auro redempti no viverent*. Livy, V 49.
[399] *terre* -- also, lands.
[400] Livy, XXI 26.
[401] Livy, *Summaries,* LXI.
[402] Livy, XXXVII 22-24; XXXVIII 39; XLIV 15.
[403] Livy, *Summaries*, XVI.
[404] Livy, XXXV 13.
[405] Livy, XXVIII 16.

Florentines, the Venetians, and this kingdom have bought themselves off from wars, and how many [times] they have submitted to an ignominy to which the Romans were submitted one single time.It would take long to recount how many towns the Florentines and Venetians had bought, in which one saw disorder afterwards and how the things that they acquire with gold they cannot defend with iron.The Romans observed this generosity and this mode of life while they lived free, but after they had come under the emperors and the emperors began to be wicked and to love more the shade than the sun, these also began to buy themselves off now from the Parthians, now the Germans, now the other surrounding peoples.This was the beginning of the ruin of so great an empire.

Similar inconveniences proceed therefore from having disarmed your peoples: from which there results one other greater, that the closer the enemy approaches you, the weaker he finds you.For whoever lives in the aforesaid modes treats badly those subjects who are within his empire but well those who are on the confines of his empire, in order to have men well disposed for keeping the enemy at a distance.From this it arises that to keep him more at a distance he gives subsidies to those lords and people who are near his confines.Whence it arises that states of this kind make a little resistance on their confines, but when the enemy has passed them they have no remedy.And they do not see how this mode of their procedure is against every good order.For the heart and vital parts of a body have to be kept armed, and not its extremities, for without the latter it lives and when the former are injured it dies; and these states keep the heart disarmed and the hands and feet armed.

What this disorder has done to Florence has been seen and is seen every day, that when an army passes through the confines and comes near the heart, she finds no more remedy.One saw the same proof with the Venetians a few years ago, and if their city had not been ringed with water one would have seen its end.One has not seen this experience often in France, by its being so great a kingdom that it has few enemies superior [to it].Nonetheless, when the English in 1513 attacked that kingdom, all that province trembled; the king himself and everyone else judged that one defeat alone could take the kingdom and the state from him.To the Romans the contrary occurred, for the closer the enemy would approach Rome the more powerful he found that city in resisting him.And one sees in the coming of Hannibal to Italy, that after three routs and after the deaths of so many captains and soldiers,they were able not only to withstand the enemy but to win the war.All arises from having the heart well armed, and taking less account of the extremities.For the foundation of its state was the people of Rome, the

Latin name, the other associated towns in Italy and their colonies -- whence they drew so many soldiers that with these they were sufficient to fight and keep the world.And that this is true one saw by the question that Hanno the Carthaginian asked of those spokesmen of Hannibal after the rout of Cannae, who, having magnified the things done by Hannibal, were asked by Hanno if of the people of Rome any had come to ask for peace, and if [those] of the Latin name and of the colonies any town had rebelled against the Romans, and both being [answered] in the negative, Hanno replied, "This war is still wholly as it was before."[406]

One sees therefore, both by this discourse and by what we have many times said elsewhere, how different is the mode of procedure of present republics and those of the ancients.One also daily sees, because of this, miraculous losses and miraculous acquisitions.For where men have little virtue, fortune shows most her potency, and because she is variable, republics and states often vary, and they will always vary as long as there does not arise someone who is such a lover of antiquity that he regulates her in such a mode that she have no cause to show, at every revolution of the sun, how much she can do.

31. How dangerous it is to believe exiles.

And it does not appear to me outside the purpose[407] to reason, among these other discourses, how dangerous a thing it is to believe those who have been driven from their fatherland, since these are things that every day have to be practised by those who have states, and since this can especially be shown with a memorable example adopted by Titus Livy in his histories, although outside his subject.[408]When Alexander the Great passed with his army into Asia, Alexander of Epirus, his brother-in-law and uncle, came with his men into Italy, called by exiled Lucanians, who gave him hope that he could through them seize all that province. Whence, having come into Italy under their faith and hope, he was put to death by them, since return to the fatherland was promised them by their citizens if they killed him.One should consider therefore how vain are the faith and promises of those who find themselves deprived of their fatherland.For, as to faith, one has to estimate that every time it might be possible by other means than by yours that they can re-enter their fatherland, they will leave you and join themselves to the

[406] Livy, XXIII 13. Machiavelli quotes the sentence in Italian.
[407] *fuori di proposito*
[408] *fuora del presupposto suo* -- lit., outside of what he presupposed or set down beforehand. Livy, VIII 24.

others, notwithstanding whatever promises they have made you.As for vain promises and hopes, so extreme is the wish that is in them to return home, that they naturally believe many things that are false, and they add many more by art; such that from whatthey believe, and what they say they believe, you are filled with hope to such an extent that, founding yourself on it, either you make an expense in vain or you make an enterprise wherein you are ruined.

I wish the aforesaid Alexander to suffice me for an example,and further that of Themistocles the Athenian; who having been made a rebel had fled to Asia to Darius, where he promised [Darius] much when he wished to attacked Greece -- such that Darius turned to the enterprise.Themistocles was not afterwards able to keep his promises, and either from shame or fear of punishment he poisoned himself.If this error was made by Themistocles, a most excellent man, one should reckon how much more those err in this who, having less virtue, let themselves be drawn more by their wish and passion.A prince should therefore move slowly to take up enterprises on the report of a banished man, because most times he is left either with shame or with very grave harm.And because the taking of towns by stealth, and by the intelligence within them that others have, also seldom succeeds, it does not seem to me outside my purpose to discuss it in the following chapter, adding to it the many modes of how the Romans acquired them.

32. In how many modes the Romans seized towns.[409]

Since all the Romans were turned towards war, they always made it with every advantage both as to expenditure and as to every other thing that one might look for with respect to it.From this it arose that they were wary of taking towns by siege; for they judged this mode as one of much expense and much inconvenience which exceeded by far the utility that might be drawn from such an acquisition.And because of this they thought that it would be better and more useful to subjugate towns by any other mode than by besieging it, whence in so many wars and in so many years there are very few examples of sieges made by them.The modes then by which they acquired cities were either by storm or by surrender.Storming was either by force and open violence or by force mixed with fraud.Open violence was either with an assault without battering the walls (which is called by them "attacking a city with a crown,"[410]because with the whole army they encircled the city and engaged every part in combat); and most times it

[409] *terre*
[410] *agredi urbem corona*

enabled them to take a city in one assault, even though it was very great, as when Scipio took New Carthage in Spain.[411]Or when this assault did not suffice, they addressed themselves to breaking the walls with rams or with their other war machines. Or they made a mine and through that entered into the city (with which mode they took the city of the Veientes);[412] or to bring themselves to the same level as those who defended the walls they made towers of wood or embankments of earth leaning against the outside walls to come to the same height as those over them.Against these assaults, whoever defended the town, in the first case, about being assaulted all around, it brought more immediate danger and had more doubtful remedies.For needing to have in every place enough defenders, either those that they had were not so many that they might be able either to supply all [needed] or to relieve them.Or if they were so able, not all were of equal spirit to resist, and from a part that yielded in combat they all were lost.It therefore happened, as I have said, that this mode had many times happy success.But when it did not succeed at first, they did not maintain it long, since this mode is dangeorus to the army; for stretched out in so much space, it remained everywhere too weak to be able to resist a sally made by those from within, and the soldiers are also disordered and fatigued.But they would try this mode just once and when it was unexpected.As to the breaking of walls, it was countered, as in present times, with ramparts.In order to resist mines they dug a countermine, and through it opposed the enemy either with arms or with other contrivances, among which was this one: that they filled jars with feathers to which they applied fire, and while burning were put them into the mine, and these with smoke and stench impeded the entrance of enemies. If they were assaulted with towers, they contrived with fire to destroy them.As to embankments of earth, they breached the walls where the embankment leaned upon the wall from below, bringing [into the city] the earth that those outside had mounded up; so that, since the earth was being piled up outside and being taken away from the inside, the embankment did not increase.These modes of storming could not be maintained for long, but it was necessary either to raise up the siege or to look for other modes to win the war, as Scipio did when he entered into Africa, having assaulted Utica and not succeeded in taking it, he lifted the siege and looked to break the Carthaginian armies.[413]Or, on the other hand, one might turn to the siege, as they did at Veii, Capua, Carthage, and Jerusalem, and such-like towns that were taken by siege.As to the acquisition

[411] Livy, XXVI 42-46.
[412] Livy, V 19.
[413] Livy, XXIX 34-36; XXX 8.

of towns by stealthy violence it occurs as happened at Palaeopolis which by treating with those within the Romans seized it.[414]The Romans and others have made many attempts at this kind of storming, and few have succeeded.The reason is that every least impediment disrupts the plan, and impediments come easily.For either the conspiracy is discovered before it is carried out, and it is discovered without much difficulty as much because of the infidelity of those with whom you have communicated it as because of the difficulty of putting it into practice, since one has to come to an agreement with enemies and with those whom you are not permitted, unless under some color, to speak.But if the conspiracy is not discovered while arranging it, there then arise in carrying it out a thousand difficulties.For if you come before the time designated, or if you come after, everything is spoiled; if a fortuitous noise is raised, like the geese of the Capitol; if a customary order is disrupted; every least error, every least mistake that is chosen, ruins the enterprise.One must add to this the darkness of the night, which puts more fear in those laboring in these dangerous things.Since the greater part of men who are conducted in similar enterprises are inexpert with the site of the country and of the places into which they are led, they confound themselves, they lose heart and entangle themselves with every least and fortuitous accident, and every false image puts them into flight.Nor does one find anyone who was happier in these fraudulent and nocturnal expeditions than Aratus the Sicyonian, who, however much worth he was in these, in the daylight and with open fights he was pusillanimous.One can judge that this was rather because of an occult virtue that he had in himself, than because these naturally ought to be more felicitous.Of these modes then many are practised, few are brought to the test, and very few succeed.

As to the acquisition of towns by surrender, either they are given up willingly or are forced.The willingness arises either from some extrinsic necessity that constrains them to take refuge under you, as did Capua with the Romans, or by a desire to be governed well, being attracted by the good government that the prince maintains in those that have willingly thrown themselves into his lap, as did the Rhodians, the Massilians, and other suchlike cities that have given themselves to the Roman people.As to forced surrender, either this force arises from a long siege, as was said above, or it arises from a continuous pressure of raids, depredations, and other ill treatment, which wishing to escape, a city yields itself.Of all these said modes, the Romans used more this last one than any other, and they waited for more than four hundred fifty years to wear their neighbors down with routs and with raids, and by means of agreements seized an ascendancy over them,

[414] Livy, VIII 25-26.

as we have discussed at other times.[415] They always founded themselves upon this mode, even when they would try all [the others]; but in the others they discovered things either dangerous or useless. For in a siege are length of time and expense; in storming, doubt and danger; in conspiracies, uncertainty.And they saw that with one defeat of the enemy army they might acquire a kingdom in a day, and that in taking an obstinate city by siege they might consume many years.

33. How the Romans gave free commissions to their captains of armies.

I reckon that reading this Livian history, and wishing to get profit [from it], one must consider all the modes of procedure of the Roman People and Senate.And among other things that merit consideration are these: to see with what authority they sent out their Consuls, Dictators, and other captains of armies, which authority one sees to have been of the greatest; and the Senate reserved for itself only the authority of beginning new wars and confirming peace [treaties], and all other things they left to the will and power of the Consul.For the People and Senate having deliberated upon a war for instance against the Latins, all the rest they left to the will of the consul, who could either give battle or not, and to besiege this or the other town, as it seemed to him.These things are verified by many examples, and especially by that which happened in an expedition against the Tuscans.[416]For Fabius, the consul, having conquered those who were near Sutrium, and planning afterwards to pass with his army into the Ciminian forest and go to Tuscany, not only did he not consult the Senate but he gave them no notice of it, though the war would have to be made in a country new, doubtful and dangerous.That is also testified by the deliberations at a meeting on this which had been called by the Senate, which, hearing of the victory of Fabius, and suspecting that he might decide to pass into the said forests in Tuscany, and judging that it would not be good to attempt that war and run that danger, sent two Legates to Fabius to make him understand that he was not to pass into Tuscany.They arrived when he had already passed and had won the victory; and, instead of preventers of the war, they returned as ambassadors of the acquisition and glory won.He who will consider well this circumstance[417] will see that it was very prudently used: for if the Senate had wished that a Consul proceed in a war step by step according to what it

[415] *D* II 1,4,6, above.
[416] Livy, IX 35-36.
[417] *termine* -- also limit or extreme.

had commissioned him [to do], it would have made him less circumspect and slower; for it would not seem to him that the glory of victory would be all his, but that the Senate, which would have governed him with its counsel, would participate in it.Besides this, the Senate would have been obliged to wish to advise a thing that it could not understand.For, notwithstanding that there might be in it men who were highly practised in war, nonetheless not being in place and not knowing infinite particulars, which are necessary to know to wish to advise well, they would make infinite errors in advising.And because of this they wished that the Consul should act by himself, and that the glory be all his, the love of which they judged would be the rein and rule to make him work well.This part is most willingly noted by me, because I see that the republics of present times, such as the Venetian and Florentine, understand it otherwise.If their captains, quartermasters, or commissaries, have to plant an artillery, they wish to hear of it and be consulted.This mode merits that praise that the other [modes] merit, which together have conducted them into the terms[418] where they are presently found.

[418] *termini*

BOOK III

1. To wish that a sect or a republic live long, it is necessary to bring it back often toward its beginning.[419]

It is a very true thing that all the things of the world have a limit to their life. But those that go the whole of the course that is ordered by heaven generally have not disordered their body but kept it ordered in such a mode that either it is not altered or it is altered to its health and not to its harm.And because I am speaking of mixed bodies, such as republics and sects, I say that those alterations are to their health that lead back toward their beginnings.Therefore those are better ordered, and have a longer life, that can often be renewed by means of their orders, or those that by some accident, outside of the stated order, come to the said renovation.And it is a thing clearer than light that these bodies not renewing themselves they do not last.

The mode of renewing them is, as was said, to reduce them towards their beginnings; for all the beginnings of sects and of republics and kingdoms ought to have in themselves some good, by means of which they might recapture their former reputation and their former increase.And because in the process of time that goodness is corrupted, unless there intervenes something that brings it back to the mark, it of necessity kills that body.Doctors of medicine say, speaking of human bodies: "that everyday something is added that at some time needs cure."[420]One makes this return toward the beginning, speaking of republics, either through extrinsic accident or intrinsic prudence.As to the first, one sees how it was necessary that Rome be taken by the French if it was to be born again, and being born again recapture new life and new virtue and recapture the observance of religion and justice, which in her had began to be corrupted.This may be very well understood from the history of Livy, where he shows that in taking the army out against the French and in the creation of the Tribunes with consular power, they did not observe any religious ceremony.[421]Thus, in the same way, not only did they not punish the three Fabii who *contra jus gentium*[422] had fought against the French but they created them Tribunes.[423]One might easily suppose that they had began to take less account of the other constitutions well-ordered by Romulus and those other wise princes than

---

[419] *principio, (principii*) -- also principle, origin.
[420] *Quod quotidie aggregatur aliquid, quod quandoque indiget curatione.*
[421] Livy, V 38.
[422] "against the law of nations"
[423] Livy, V 36-37.

was reasonable and necessary to maintain the free life.Then came this external blow, so that all the orders of that city might be recaptured, and that it might be shown to that people not only that it is necessary to maintain religion and justice but also to esteem their good citizens, and to take more account of their virtue than of those advantages that they might seem to lack through their works.One sees that this followed immediately, for as soon as Rome was retaken they renovated all the ancient orders of their religion, punished those Fabii who had fought *contra jus gentium*, and besides they so esteemed the virtue and goodness of Camillus that the Senate and others, putting aside all envy, gave over to him all the burden of that republic.[424]It is necessary, then, as was said, that men who live together in any order whatever often examine themselves, either through these extrinsic accidents or through intrinsic ones.As for the latter, it must needs arise either from a law, that often reviews the accounts of the men who are in that body or, better yet, from a good man who arises from them, who with his examples and his virtuous works brings about the same effect as the order.

This good then arises in republics either through the virtue of a man or through the virtue of an order.As to the latter, the orders that drew back the Roman Republic toward its beginning were the Tribunes of the plebs, the Censors, and all the other laws that went against the ambition and insolence of men.These orders had need of being brought to life by the virtue of a citizen, who spiritedly follows and executes them against the power[425] of those who trespass.Of these executions, before the taking of Rome by the French,[426] what were notable were the death of the sons of Brutus,[427] the death of the ten citizens,[428] that of Maelius the corn-dealer.[429]After the taking of Rome [there was] the death of Manlius Capitolinus,[430] the death of the son of Manlius Torquatus,[431] the execution by Papirius Cursor against Fabius his Master of Horse,[432] the accusation of the Scipios.[433]These things, because they were excessive and notable, every time one might arise, made men draw back toward the mark; and when they began to be rarer they also began to give more space for men to corrupt them and with greater danger and more tumult.For from one to the other of such executions there ought not pass

[424] Livy, V 39-41, 46.
[425] *potenza* -- also potency, might.
[426] Livy, V 32-50.
[427] Livy, II 3-5.
[428] Livy, III 56-58.
[429] Livy, IV 13-16.
[430] Livy, VI 11-20.
[431] Livy, VIII 7-8.
[432] Livy, VIII 30-36.
[433] Livy, XXXVIII 50-60.

more than ten years, for this time having passed men begin to change their customs and trespass upon the laws; and if there does not arise something by which the penalty is brought back to their memory and renews fear in their minds,[434] so many delinquents quickly come together that they cannot be punished anymore without danger.On this subject those who governed the state of Florence from 1434 until 1494 used to say that it was necessary for them to retake the state every five years, otherwise it was difficult to maintain it: and they called retaking the state putting such terror and such fear in men as they had put in taking it, having at that time punished[435] those who, according to that mode of life, had done wrong.But as that punishment is extinguished in the memory, men take courage to attempt new things and to speak evil, and therefore it is necessary to provide for its returning toward its beginnings.This drawing back of republics towards their beginning arises also from the simple virtue of one man, without depending on any law that stimulates you to any execution; nonetheless they are of such reputation and an example, that good men desire to imitate them, and the wicked are ashamed to maintain a [way of] life contrary to theirs.Those who in Rome especially brought about these good effects were Horatius Cocles,[436]Scaevola,[437] Fabricius, the two Decii,[438] Regulus Attilius and some others, who with their rare and virtuous examples brought about in Rome almost the same effect that laws and orders might have done.If the above-written executions, together with these particular examples, had been made to follow at least every ten years in that city, it would follow of necessity that she would never have been corrupted.But as both these two things began to thin out, the corruptions began to multiply; for after Marcus Regulus one does not see there any similar example -- and although there arose in Rome the two Catos, so distant was he from them, and they from each other, and they remained so alone that they were not able with their good examples to do any good work.And the last Cato especially who, finding the city in good part corrupted, was not able with his example to make the citizens become better. And this suffices as to republics.

But as to sects, one also sees these renovations to be necessary by the example of our Religion, which, if it had not been brought back toward its beginning by Saint Francis and Saint Dominic would have been wholly extinguished; for these with poverty and with the example of the life of Christ led it back into the minds of men where it was already

[434] *animi*
[435] *battuti* -- lit., battered or beaten.
[436] Livy, II 10.
[437] Livy, II 11-13.
[438] Livy, VIII 9-10; X 26-29.

extinguished.So powerful were their new orders that they were the cause that the dishonesty of the prelates and the heads of religion did not ruin it; for still living in poverty and having such credit with peoples in confessions and sermons, they give them to understand that it is evil of them to speak evil of evil, and that it is good to live under their obedience, and if they make errors to leave them to be chastised by God.Thus these do the worst they can, for they do not fear that punishment that they do not see and do not believe in.Hence then this renovation has maintained, and maintains, this religion.

Kingdoms also have need of renewal and of bringing their laws back to their beginnings.One sees what good effect this part does in the kingdom of France, which kingdom lives under the laws and under [constitutional] orders more than any other kingdom.[439]The which laws and orders are maintained by parliaments, and especially that of Paris: which [laws and orders] are renovated by them whenever they make an execution against a prince of that kingdom, and when they condemn the king in their judgments.Until now it has maintained itself by having been an obstinate executor against that Nobility; but should it at any time leave any unpunished and these come to multiply, without doubt it would arise that either it would have to correct them with great disorder or that that kingdom break down.

One concludes then that there is nothing more necessary in a common life, whether it be sect, kingdom, or republic, than to restore to it that reputation that it had in its beginnings, and to contrive that it be either good orders or good men that bring about this effect, and not let it be done by an extrinsic force; for although at times it might be the best remedy as it was in Rome, it is so dangerous that it is not in any mode to be desired.In order to demonstrate to everyone how much the actions of particular men made Rome great and how in that city they caused many good effects, I shall launch into the narration and discussion of these, within the limits of which this third book and last part of this first Decade will conclude.Although the actions of the kings were great and notable, nonetheless, since the history speaks of them at length, I shall omit them; nor shall we otherwise speak of them except of some thing they had worked upon appertaining to their private advantage, and we shall begin with Brutus, father of Roman liberty.

2.That it is a very wise thing to simulate madness at [the right] time.

There has never been anyone so prudent nor so esteemed as wise because of any of his distinguished works as Junius Brutus merits to be so

[439] See *Prince*, XIX.

held in his simulation of stupidity.Although Titus Livy expresses only one cause that induced him to such simulation, which was to be able to live with greater security and to maintain his patrimony; nevertheless, considering his mode of procedure, one can believe that he simulated this also in order to be less observed, and to have greater opportunity to overpower the kings and liberate his fatherland, whenever he would be given the occasion.That he might have thought of this, one sees first in the interpretation of the oracle of Apollo, when he pretended to fall in order to kiss the earth, judging that with this [act] the Gods [would be] favorable to his thoughts; and afterwards when, after the death of Lucretia, among the father and the husband and the other relatives of hers he was the first to take the knife from the wound, making those standing around swear that they would never in the future support anyone who might reign in Rome.[440]From the example of this man all those who are ill-content with a prince have learned: and they ought first measure and first weigh their forces, and if they are so powerful that they can show themselves to be his enemies and openly make war on him, they ought to enter upon this way as less dangerous and more honorable.But if they are of such quality that their forces do not suffice to make war openly on him, they ought with all industry make themselves his friends; and to this effect enter upon all the ways they judge to be necessary, following his pleasures and taking delight all those things that they see he delights in.This intimacy first makes you live securely, and without incurring any danger to you it lets you enjoy the good fortune of that prince together with him, and you bring forth every opportunity of satisfying your intention.[441]It is true that some say that one should not stand so close to princes that their fall includes you, nor so far away that when they fall you are not in time to leap over their ruin -- that middle way would be truer if it could be observed, but because I believe it to be impossible, one must return to the two above-written modes, which is either to open oneself or to bind up oneself to them.He who does otherwise, and he is a man who is notable because of his qualities, lives in continuous danger. Nor is it enough for him to say: I do not care for anything, I desire neither honors nor advantages, I wish to live quietly and without trouble!For these excuses are heard and not accepted; nor is it possible for men that have quality to choose to refrain [from action], when they well and truly choose to do so and without any ambition, for it is not believed of them, such that if they wish to be let be, others will not let them be.One must then play a fool as did Brutus, and act [with] much mad[ness], praising, speaking, seeing, and doing things against your intention in order to

[440] Livy, I 56-59.
[441] *animo*

be pleasing to the prince.And since we have spoken of the prudence of this man in recovering the liberty of Rome, we shall now speak of his severity in maintaining it.

3.That it is necessary in wishing to maintain a liberty acquired anew to kill the sons of Brutus.

The severity of Brutus was no less necessary than it was useful in maintaining in Rome that liberty that he had acquired there, which is an example rare in all the memories of things -- to see a father sitting on a tribunal and not only condemn his sons to death but be present at their death.It will always be known by those who read ancient things that after a change of State, either from a republic to tyranny or from a tyranny to a republic, a memorable execution is necessary against the enemies of present conditions.He who takes a tyranny and does not kill Brutus, and he who makes a state free and does not kill the sons of Brutus, maintains himself a short time.And because this subject was discussed at length above,[442] I leave it at that which has already been said of it.I shall adduce only one example, having been most memorable, in our days and our fatherland.This is Piero Soderini, who believed to overcome with his patience and goodness that appetite that was in the sons of Brutus of returning under another government, and he deceived himself.Although he by his prudence knew this necessity,[443] and that chance and the ambition of those against him gave him occasion to extinguish them, nonetheless he never made up his mind[444] to do so.For, besides [his] believing to be able with patience and with goodness to extinguish bad humors, and with rewards to some dissipate some of their enmity, he judged (and he often bore witness [to this] with his friends) that to wish to go boldly against his opposition and strike down his adversaries, he needed to take extraordinary authority, and breach civil equality with laws.Which, even though afterwards it would not have been used tyrannically by him, would have frightened the universality so much that they would never again after his death re-establish a gonfalonier for life -- which order he judged was good to increase and maintain.That respect was wise and good; nonetheless one ought never let run an evil [out of] respect for a good, when that good could easily be overwhelmed by that evil.He ought to have believed that, since his works and his intention would be judged by the end, and if fortune and life accompanied him, he could attest

[442] *D* I 16.
[443] i.e., of killing the sons of Brutus
[444] *animo*

to everyone that what he had done was for the safety of the fatherland and not for his ambition; and he could have regulated things in such a mode that one of his successors could not do for evil that which he had done for good.But he was deceived by the first opinion, not understanding that malignity is not tamed by time nor placated by any gift.Such that, by not knowing [how] to resemble Brutus, he lost together with the fatherland the state and reputation.And as it is a difficult thing to save a free state, so it is difficult to save a royal one, as the following chapter will show.

4.A prince does not live secure in a principate while those live who have been despoiled of it.

The death of Tarquinius Priscus caused by the sons of Ancus, and the death of Servius Tullius caused by Tarquinius Superbus,[445] shows how difficult it is and how dangerous to despoil one of the kingdom and let that one live, even though you seek to gain him with reward.One sees that Tarquinius Priscus was deceived in his seeming to possess that kingdom juridically, having been given it by the people and confirmed by the Senate.Nor did he believe that the sons of Ancus could be so indignant that they would not content themselves with that which contented all Rome.Servius Tullius deceived himself, believing he could with new rewards gain to himself the sons of Tarquin.In such a mode, as to the first, one can warn every prince that he will never live secure in his principate while those live who have been despoiled of it.As to the second, every powerful one can remember that old injuries are never cancelled by new benefits, and so much less when the new benefit is less than the injury had been.Without doubt Servius Tullius was little prudent in believing that the sons of Tarquin would be patient in being sons-in-law of him [over whom] they judged they ought to be king.This appetite for ruling is so great that it not only enters into the breasts of those who await the kingdom, but in those who do not await the kingdom; as it did in the wife of Tarquin the Younger, son of Servius who, moved by this rage, against all piety [for her] father moved the husband against the father and took from the latter his life and kingdom: so much more did she esteem being queen than daughter of the king.If then Tarquinius Priscus and Servius Tullius lost the kingdom by not knowing how to secure themselves against those from whom they had usurped it, Tarquinius Superbus lost it through not observing the orders of ancient kings, as will be shown in the subsequent chapter.

[445] Livy I.40, 46-48

5. What makes a king lose a kingdom of which he was hereditary.

Tarquinius Superbus having killed Servius Tullius, who left no heirs, he came to possess the kingdom securely, not having to fear those things that had harmed his predecessors. Although the mode of seizing the kingdom had been extraordinary and odious, nonetheless, if he had observed the ancient orders of the other kings, he would have been borne with, nor would the Senate and the plebs have been roused against him to take the state away from him. This man then was not driven out by Sextus, his son, having raped Lucretia, but by his having broken the laws of the kingdom and his governing it tyrannically, for he took from the Senate all authority concentrating it in himself;[446] and such matters as had been done in public places to the satisfaction of the Roman Senate, were brought in to be done in his palace with the burden and envy his, such that in a short time he stripped Rome of all that liberty that it had maintained under the other kings. Nor did it suffice him to make enemies of the Patricians, but he also roused the Plebs against himself, exhausting them with mechanical labors which was wholly alien to what had been done by his predecessors;[447] such that Rome being full of cruel and proud examples, the minds[448] of all the Romans had already been disposed to rebellion whenever there might be occasion. If the accident of Lucretia had not occurred, as soon as another would have been born it would have brought forth the same effect. For if Tarquinius had lived as did other kings, and Sextus, his son, had made that error, Brutus and Collatinus would have appealed to Tarquinius for vengeance against Sextus, and not to the Roman People.[449] Let princes know then that they begin to lose their state at that moment that they begin to break the laws and those modes and customs that are old and under which men have lived a long time. When they are deprived of the state, if they ever become so prudent that they recognize with what ease principates are kept by those who have wisely counseled themselves, that loss would be so much harder, and they would condemn themselves to a greater penalty than that to which others would condemn them; for it is much easier to be loved by the good than by the bad, and to obey the laws than to wish to command them. Wishing to understand the mode they have to take to do this, they do not have to endure any other labor than to take for their mirror the life of good princes, as were Timoleon of Corinth, Aratus the Sicyonian, and the like: in the lives[450] of which he will

[446] Livy, I 58.
[447] Livy, I 56, 59.
[448] *animi*
[449] Livy, I 59-60.
[450] See Plutarch, *The Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*, New York: Modern Library.

find such security and such satisfaction in those who rule and in those who are ruled, that it should make him wish to imitate them, since he easily can do it for the reasons said.For men, when they are governed well, do not seek nor wish for other liberty, as happened to the peoples governed by the two previously named, who constrained them to be princes while they lived, even though they often attempted to retire to private life.And because this and the two antecedent chapters have reasoned of humors aroused against princes, and of the conspiracies made by the sons of Brutus against the fatherland, and of those made against Tarquinius Priscus and Servius Tullius, it seems to me a thing not outside the subject to speak of them at greater length in the following chapter, since it is a matter worthy of being noted by princes and private [men].

6.Of Conspiracies.

It did not seem to me [that I ought] to omit the reasoning on conspiracies, since it is thing so dangerous to princes and private [men].For one sees that many more princes have by them lost life and state than by open war, for to be able to make open war against a prince is granted to few, the power to conspire against him is granted to everyone.On the other hand, private men do not enter into an enterprise more dangerous or more reckless than this one, for it is difficult and most dangerous in all its stages.Whence it arises that many attempt it, and very few have the desired end. In order, then, that princes might learn to guard themselves against these dangers, and that private [men] may enter more timidly into them, and learn rather to live under that imperium where chance has placed them, I shall speak of it at length, not omitting anything notable as an example for one and the other.And truly that sentence of Cornelius Tacitus is golden, that says: that men have to honor things past and obey the present ones, and they ought to desire good princes, and however they might turn out to be, to tolerate them.[451]And truly whoever does otherwise most of the time ruins himself and his fatherland.

Entering into the matter, we ought then consider first against whom conspiracies are made; and it will be found to be made either against the fatherland or against a prince.I wish at present that we reason of these two; for of those that they make in order to give a town[452] to enemies who besiege it, or those which from whatever cause are like these, have been

[451] *Histories*, IV viii.
[452] *terra*

sufficiently spoken of above.[453]In this first part those against a prince will be treated, and first we shall examine their causes, which are many, but one is much more important than all the others.And this is being hated by the universality; because when the prince has aroused this universal hatred, it is reasonable that there be individuals whom he has harmed more and who desire to avenge themselves.This desire of theirs is increased by that universal hostile disposition that they see is aroused against him.A prince, then, ought to avoid these private charges; and since what they are to do to avoid them has been treated elsewhere,[454] I do not wish to speak of it here.For guarding himself from [universal hatred], simple individual offenses will make less war against him; because, first, one seldom encounters men who estimate an injury to be such that they will place themselves in great danger to avenge it; and the other, because even if they have the will[455] and the power to do it, they are held back by that universal benevolence that they see a prince to have.Injuries must needs be of goods, of blood, and of honor.Of those of blood, menaces are more dangerous than executions; or rather, menaces are most dangerous and in executions there is not any danger, for he who is dead cannot think of vengeance and those who are living often leave the thought of it to you.But he who is menaced, and who sees himself constrained by a necessity either of acting or suffering, becomes a most dangerous man for the prince, as will be said in its place with particulars.Outside of this necessity, goods and honor are those two things that offend men more than any other offense: and from these the prince ought to guard himself, for one can never despoil one so much that there does not remain to him a knife to avenge himself; one can never so dishonor [a man] that he does not retain an obstinate spirit of vengeance.Of honors taken from men, those concerned with women matter more; after this, contempt to one's person.This made Pausanias take arms against Philip of Macedon; this has made many others take up arms against many princes.And in our times Luzio Belanti would not have been moved to conspire against Pandolfo, tyrant of Siena, if he had not given his daughter for a wife and then taken her away, as will be said in its place.The greatest cause that made the Pazzi conspire against the Medici was the inheritance of Giovanni Bonromei, which had been taken away by order of the Medici.There is another cause, and a very great one, that makes men conspire against the prince, and that is the desire to liberate the fatherland which that prince has seized.This cause moved Brutus and Cassius against Caesar; this has moved many others against Phalarises, Dionysiuses, and other

[453] *D* II.32
[454] *Prince*, XIX.
[455] *animo*

occupiers of their fatherland.Nor can any tyrant guard himself from this humor, except to lay down the tyranny.And because one does not find anyone who has done this, one finds few who have not ended badly; this gave rise to that verse of Juvenal:

> To the son-in-law of Ceres without slaughter and wounds few kings descend, and few tyrants by a dry death.[456]

The dangers that conspiracies bring, as I said above, are great, they are present at all times, for in these cases one runs a danger in planning them, in executing them, and when they are executed.Those who conspire are either one or many.One cannot be said to be a conspiracy, but [rather] it is a firm disposition in a man to kill the prince.Of the three dangers that conspiracies run, this alone lacks the first; for before its execution it carries no danger, for no other having his secret, there is no danger that his plan will come to the ear of the prince.Such a firm deliberation can enter into any man of any lot, great, small, noble, low, familiar and not familiar with the prince, for it is licit for anyone at some time to speak with him, and if it is licit for one to speak it is licit to purge his mind.Pausanias, who has been spoken of at other times, killed Philip of Macedon as he was going to the temple with a thousand armed men around him, and he was between his son and his son-in-law; but that man was noble and known to the prince.A poor and abject Spaniard gave Ferdinand, king of Spain a knife wound in the neck: the wound was not mortal but one sees from this that he had the spirit and opportunity to do it.A dervish, a Turkish priest, drew a scimitar on Bajazet, father of the present Turk; he did not injure him, but he surely had the mind and opportunity to wish to do so.Of minds so made, one does not find, I believe, many who would wish [actually] to do it, for in wishing there is neither punishment nor any danger, but there are very few who would [actually] do it. But of those who do it, very few or none are not killed in the attempt; hence one does not find [some]one who wishes to go to a certain death. But let us leave these individual wishes and let us come to conspiracies among many.

I say that one finds in histories all conspiracies to have been made by great men or those very familiar with the prince; for others, unless they are completely mad, are not able to conspire, for weak men and those not familiar with the prince lack all those hopes and those opportunities that make successful the execution of a conspiracy.First, weak men are not able to

---

[456] *Ad generum Cereris sine caede et vulnere pauci*
Descendunt reges et sicca morte tiranni. -- Juvenal, *Satires*, X.112-113. That is, few have escaped a bloody death.

meet with anyone who might keep faith with them, for one cannot consent to their wish under any of those hopes that make men enter into great dangers; in such a mode that as they are increased to two or more persons, they find an accuser and they are ruined.But even if they are so lucky that they avoid having this accuser, there are such difficulties inherent in its execution because they do not have easy access to the prince, that it is impossible for them that in its execution they not be ruined; for if great men and those who have easy access are crushed by those difficulties that will be discussed below, it must needs be that [for the weak] these difficulties increase without end.Men therefore (for where life and goods are concerned men are not wholly insane) when they see themselves as weak, they guard themselves, and when they are annoyed with a prince, they employ themselves in cursing him, and they wait for those of greater quality than theirs to avenge them.Indeed if one finds that someone of their kind has attempted something, one ought to praise their intention but not their prudence.One sees therefore that they who have conspired have been all great men or familiars of the prince.Of these, many have conspired moved as much to do so by too many benefits as by too many injuries; as Perennis was against Commodus, Plautianus against Severus, Sejanus against Tiberius.These men were all established by their emperors with such riches, honor and rank, that it seemed that they lacked nothing for the perfection of power but the imperium; and not wishing to lack this, they were moved to conspire against the prince, and all their conspiracies had that end that their ingratitude merited.Yet of similar ones in more recent times, that of Jacopo di Appiano against Messer Piero Gambacorti, prince of Pisa, had a good end.This Jacopo was raised and nurtured, and had his reputation from [Messer Piero], then took the state away from him.Of these [kind] in our times is that of Coppola against King Ferdinand of Aragon.This Coppola came to such greatness that it seemed to him that he lacked nothing but the kingdom, and by wishing for [that] also, he lost [his] life.And truly if any conspiracy against princes made by great men should have had a good end, this should have, since it was made, one can say, by another king, and one who had such opportunity of accomplishing his desire; but that lust for domination that blinds them also blinds them in managing this enterprise, for if they knew how to do this wickedness with prudence, it would be impossible for them not to succeed.A prince, then, if he wishes to guard himself against conspiracies, ought to fear more those to whom he has gratified too much than those whom he has injured too much; for the latter lack opportunity that the former have in abundance.The intention is the same, for the desire for domination is as great as, or greater than, that for

vengeance. They ought therefore give to their friends such authority that there might be some interval between it and the principate, and that there be in the middle something to be desired.Otherwise it will be a rare thing if what happened to the princes written above will not happen to them.But let us turn to our order.

I say that since those who conspire have to be great men and who have easy access to the prince, what the results have been of these their enterprises have to be discussed, and to see the cause of what has made them successful and unsuccessful.As I have said above, they find dangers at three times: before, during the deed, and after.One finds few to have a good issue, for it is almost impossible for them to pass all of them successfully.Beginning to discuss the dangers before, which are the most important, I say that it is needful to be very prudent, and to have great luck when in managing a conspiracy it is not to be discovered.They are discovered either by report or by conjecture.Report arises from finding too little faith or too little prudence among the men with whom you have communicated; one finds little faith easily, for you cannot communicate it except to men you trust, who for your love will risk death, or to men who are ill-content with the prince.Of the trusted, one can find only one or two; but as you extend yourself to many, it is impossible to find them.Further, it must needs be indeed that the goodwill they bear to you be great, to wish that the danger not appear to be greater than the fear of punishment.Furthermore, men often deceive themselves of the love that you judge that a man bears to you, nor you can you ever assure yourself of it unless you test it, and to test it in this is dangerous to the extreme.Even if you have tested in some other dangerous thing where they have been faithful to you, you cannot measure that faith, since this surpasses by far every other quality of danger.If you measure faith by the ill-content one has with the prince, in this you can easily deceive yourself, for immediately upon your having manifested your mind to the ill-content, you have given matter to become content, and to keep him faithful it must well be that his hatred be great or that the authority you have be very great.

Hence it arises that many [conspiracies] are revealed and crushed in their very beginnings, and when one has been secret among many men for a long time, it is held as a miraculous thing, as was that of Piso against Nero, and in our times that of the Pazzi against Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, of which more than fifty men were aware, and they conducted it to its execution before they were discovered.As for discovery because of little prudence, it occurs when a conspirator speaks of it with little caution, in such a mode that a servant or other third person hears it; as happened to the sons of Brutus who, in planning the thing with the legates of Tarquin, were

overheard by a servant who accused them; or when through levity you have communicated it to a woman or a boy whom you love or to similar frivolous persons, as did Dymnus, one of those who conspired with Philotas against Alexander the Great, who communicated the conspiracy to Nicomachus, a boy loved by him, who immediately told it to his brother Cebalinus and Cebalinus to the king.As for discovery by conjecture, there is the example of Pisonian conspiracy against Nero, in which Scaevinus, one of the conspirators, on the day before he had to kill Nero, made his will, ordered that Milichius, his freedman, sharpen his old and rusty dagger, freed all his servants and gave them money, and ordered bandages to be made to bind up wounds; from which indications Milichius became aware of the thing[457] and accused him to Nero.Scaevinus was taken and with him Natales, another conspirator, who had been seen together speaking at length and in secret the day before; and as their reasonings did not agree, they were forced to confess the truth, such that the conspiracy was discovered with the ruin of all the conspirators.

From these causes of the discovery of conspiracies it is impossible so to guard oneself that by malice, by imprudence, or by levity it is not discovered, whenever the number of the knowers of it goes beyond three or four.And when more than one is taken, it is impossible not to find it out, for two cannot agree with each in all their reasonings. When one is taken, if he is a strong man, he can with strength of mind[458] keep silent about the conspirators; but it must needs be that the conspirators have no less [strength of] mind than he to stand firm and not be discovered through flight; for if one part lacks [strength of] mind, either the one being held or the one who is free, the conspiracy is discovered.And rare is the example brought in by Titus Livy from the conspiracy made against Hieronymus, king of Syracuse, when Theodorus,[459] one of the conspirators, was arrested; with a great virtue he concealed all the conspirators, and accused the friends of the king.And on the other side, the conspirators trusted so much in the virtue of Theodorus that none of them left Syracuse or gave any sign of fear.You pass all these dangers, therefore, in managing a conspiracy, before you come to its execution; and in wishing to avoid them there are these remedies.The truest, or rather, better to say, the only one, is not to give time to the conspirators to accuse, and to communicate to them the thing when you wish to carry it out, and not before.Those that have done this certainly avoid the dangers found in

[457] *la cosa* – i.e, the plot.
[458] *animo*
[459] Theodotus. See Livy, XXIV iv-vii.

preparing it, and often others; or rather, they all have come to a good end.And anyone prudent has the opportunity of governing
himself in this mode.I wish it to suffice for me to adduce these two examples.

Nelematus,[460]being unable to support the tyranny of Aristotimus, tyrant of Epirus, assembled in his house many relatives and friends, and exhorted them to liberate the fatherland, and some of them asked for time to deliberate and order themselves; whereupon Nelematus made his servants shut up the house and to those who he had called said: Either you swear to go now to put this into execution, or I shall give you all as prisoners to Aristotimus.These words moved them and they swore, and going, without any loss of time, they successfully executed the order of Nelematus.One of the Magi having by deceit occupied the kingdom of the Persians, and Ortanes, one of the great men of the kingdom, having learned of and discovered the fraud, he discussed it with six other princes of that state, saying that it was for them to vindicate the kingdom from the tyranny of that Magus.And when some of them asked for time, Darius, one of the six called by Ortanes, rose up and said: Either we go now to put this into execution, or I shall go to accuse all.And thus, by accord, they all rose up, without giving time to any to repent, they executed their designs.[461]Similar to these two cases also is the mode that the Aetolians took in killing Nabis, the Spartan tyrant; these had sent Alexamenes, their citizen, with thirty horse and two hundred infantry to Nabis under the color of sending him aid; and they communicated the secret only to Alexamenes, and of the others they commanded that they obey in everything whatsoever under penalty of exile.That man then went to Sparta, and he never communicated his commission except when he wished to execute it; thus they succeeded in killing [Nabis].[462]These men then by these modes have avoided those dangers that planning conspiracies brings, and he who will imitate them always will avoid them.

And that anyone can do as they did, I wish to show by the example of Piso, previously mentioned above. Piso was an extremely great and a most highly reputed man, a familiar of Nero's, and he was much trusted by him.Nero often went to his gardens to eat with him.Piso therefore could make friends of men of spirit who had the heart and apt disposition to such an execution (which is very easy for a great man); and when Nero was in his gardens [Piso] could have communicated to them the thing, and with suitable words encourage them to do that from which they would not have time to

[460]Hellanicus was the conspirator against Aristotimus (272 B. C). There is no mention of a Nelematus. Justin, XXVI 1.
[461] Herodotus, III 61-79.
[462] Livy, XXXV 35.

excuse themselves, and it was impossible that it should not succeed.And thus if all the other [conspiracies] will be examined, one will find few that could not have been conducted in the same mode.But men ordinarily little understand the actions of the world and often make extremely grave errors, and much more in those that have more of the extraordinary, as does this.You ought then never communicate the plot if not necessitated to do so, and at the moment of action; and if, however, you wish to communicate it, to communicate to one alone, of whom you have had a very long experience or who is moved by the same causes as you are.To find one so made is much easier than to find more, and because of this there is less danger.Moreover, if you are deceived, there is some remedy for defending yourself, where there is none if there be many conspirators.For I have heard it said by a prudent man that with one, one can say everything; for, if you do not let yourself be led to writing in your own hand, the yes of one is of as much value as the no of another.And from writing everyone ought to guard himself as from a rock, for there is nothing that more easily convicts you than writing in your own hand. Plautianus, wishing to have Severus the emperor and Antoninus his son killed, commissioned Saturninus the tribune [to do] the thing, who, wishing to accuse him and not to obey him, and doubting that when making the charge he would be believed more than Plautianus, he asked for a warrant in his hand that would testify to this commission. Plautianus, blinded by ambition, gave it.Whence it followed that he was accused by the tribune and convicted.Without that warrant and certain other tokens Plautianus would have prevailed, so audaciously he denied it.You find then some remedy from the accusation of one, when you cannot be convicted by a writing or some other tokens, from which one ought to guard oneself.

In the Pisonian conspiracy there was a female called Epicharis, who had formerly been Nero's lover, who, judging that it would be to the purpose to place among the conspirators a captain of some triremes that Nero kept for his guard, communicated to him the conspiracy but not the conspirators.Whence, that captain breaking his faith with her and accusing her to Nero, so great was the audacity of Epicharis in her denials that Nero remained confused and did not condemn her.There are then in communicating the plot to one alone two dangers: one that he not accuse you upon being tried; the other that he not accuse you upon being convicted and constrained by pain, having been arrested on some suspicion or some evidence against him.But there is some remedy for both these two dangers: since one can deny the first alleging that he has some hatred towards you, and deny the second alleging that force constrained him to speak lies.It is therefore prudence not to communicate the plot to anyone, but to do it

according to the above-written examples; or if you still do communicate it, not to let it go beyond one; and if it is somewhat more dangerous, it is much less than communicating it with many.Very like this mode is when a necessity constrains you to do to that prince what you see that the prince would wish to do to you, which [necessity] might be so great that it does not give you time except to think of how to secure yourself.This necessity leads the thing almost always to its desired end; and to prove it I wish two examples to suffice.

Commodus, the emperor, had among the first of his friends and familiars Laetus and Electus, heads of the praetorian soldiers, and he had Marcia as first among his concubines or mistresses; and because he was reproved by them at times for the modes by which he tarnished his person and the imperium, he decided to have them killed, and he wrote on a list Marcia, Laetus and Electus and some others whom he wished the following night to have killed; and he placed this list under the pillow of his bed and, going to wash himself, a little boy favorite of his, playing in the room and on the bed, came to find this list; and, going out with it in hand, he met Marcia, who took it from him.Having read it and seen its contents, she immediately sent for Laetus and Electus.All three having come to know the danger in which they were, decided to anticipate him and, without losing any time, they killed Commodus the following night.Antoninus Caracalla, the emperor, was with his armies in Mesopotamia, and he had Macrinus as his prefect, a man more a civilian[463] than a warrior; and as it happens with princes who are not good who always fear that others not do against them what they themselves merit, Antoninus wrote to Maternianus his friend in Rome, that he learn from the astrologers if there were someone who aspired to the imperium and that he advise him of it.Whereupon Maternianus wrote him that Macrinus was the one who aspired to it; and the letter came into the hands of Macrinus before that of the emperor, and with that knowledge the necessity of either killing him first before a new letter came from Rome or being killed, he commissioned Martialis, a faithful centurion, and whose brother Antoninus had killed a few days before, that he kill [Antoninus] -- it was successfully[464] executed by him.You see then that this necessity that does not give time brings about almost the same effect as the mode that was said above by me [what] Nelematus of Epirus took.You see also what I said almost at the beginning of this discourse, how menaces harm princes more and are the cause of more efficacious conspiracies than are injuries.From such a prince ought to guard himself, for men either have to be caressed or one

[463] *civile* -- civilian, in the sense of one who is versed in the law.
[464] *felicemente* -- also, happily

must assure oneself of them, and never to reduce them to terms that they come to think that they must needs either be killed or kill someone else.As to the dangers that are run in executing it, these arise either from the change of order, or from the lack of spirit[465] in the one who executes it, or from an error that the executor makes because of his lack of prudence, or by not completing the plot, part of those remaining who were intended to be killed. I say then that there is nothing that so disturbs or is an impediment to all the actions of men as is having to change an order in an instant without having time and to turn away from what had ordered before.If this change makes for disorder anywhere, it does so in the things of war, and in things similar to those of which we have spoken; for in such actions there is nothing so necessary to do as that men make firm their spirits[466] to execute that part that touches them.And if men have turned for many days [their] imagination[467] to one mode and one order, and that suddenly changes, it is impossible that it not disturb them all and everything not be ruined; in such a mode that it is better for them to execute a plot according to the order given, even if one sees some inconvenience, than it is, in wishing to cancel it, to enter into a thousand inconveniences.This happens when one does not have time to reorder oneself, for when one has time, a man can govern himself according to his own mode.

The conspiracy of the Pazzi against Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici is well known. The order given was that they planned to dine with the Cardinal of San Giorgio,[468]and kill him while at that meal.Those who were to kill him, those who were to take the palace, and those who would run through the city and call the people to liberty, were assigned.It happened that while the Pazzi, the Medici, and the cardinal were in the cathedral church in Florence at a solemn service, it was understood that Giuliano would not dine there that morning; that made the conspirators gather together, and what they were to do in the house of the Medici, they decided to do in church.That disturbed the whole order, for Giovambattista da Montesecco did not wish to take part in the homicide, saying that he did not wish to do it in church; such that they had to change to new agents in every action, and since these had not had time to make firm their spirit, they made such errors that in the execution of it they were crushed.

The one who executes lacks spirit either from reverence or from the executor's own cowardice.And so great is the majesty and the reverence that accompanies the presence of a prince, that it is an easy thing that these either

[465] *animo*
[466] *animi*
[467] *fantasia*
[468] The Cardinal Raffaele Riario. See *Prince*, III.

weaken or dismay an executor.To Marius, having been taken by the Minturnians, a slave was sent to kill him; but he, frightened by the presence of that man and of the memory of his name, having become cowardly he lost all force to kill him.If this power[469]is in a man bound and imprisoned and overwhelmed by bad fortune, how much greater can it be in an unshackled prince, with the majesty of ornaments, of pomp and of his retinue?Such that this pomp can frighten you or, in truth, with some pleasing welcome appease you.Some conspired against Sitalces, king of Thracia; they fixed the day of the execution, assembled at the appointed place where the prince was -- not one of them moved to harm him, such that they left without having attempted anything and without knowing what had prevented them, and they accused each other.They fell into the same error several times, such that the conspiracy being discovered they suffered the penalty for that evil that they could have done but did not have the will to do.Two of his brothers conspired against Alfonso, duke of Ferrara, and they used as an intermediary Giannes, a priest and cantor of the duke's, who at their request conducted the duke many times to them, such that they freely could have killed him.Nonetheless, not one of them dared to do it; such that, being discovered, they suffered the punishment of their wickedness and lack of prudence.This negligence could not arise from anything other except that it must needs have been either that his presence dismayed them or that some humanity of the prince humbled them.There arise in such executions inconveniences or errors from lack of prudence or from lack of spirit, for both these two things possess you and, carried by that confusion of brain, make you say and do that what you ought not.

That men are [so] possessed and confound themselves, one cannot better demonstrate [than] Titus Livy when, in telling of Alexamenus the Aetolian who, when he wanted to kill Nabis the Spartan, of whom we have spoken above, and the time for execution came, revealed to his [men] what they had to do, Titus Livy says these words: "He himself collected his mind, confused by thinking of so great a thing."[470]For it is impossible that anyone, even if he has a firm spirit, and is used to the death of men and the employment of steel, that he not be confused.Therefore one ought to choose men experienced in such management, and to put faith in no one else, even though they are held to be very spirited; because of the spirit in great things, there is no one, without having had experience, who can promise with certainty.This confusion then can either make you drop arms in hand, or make you say things that have the same effect.Lucilla, sister of Commodus,

[469]*potenza*
[470]*Collegit et ipse animum, confusum tantae cogitatione rei.* Livy XXXV 35.

ordered that Quintianus kill him. He waited for Commodus at the entrance of the amphitheater and confronting him with a naked dagger, he cried out: "The Senate sends you this."These words made him to be taken before he could lower his arm to strike.Messer Antonio da Volterra, deputed, as was said above, to kill Lorenzo de' Medici, on coming toward him said, "Ah, traitor!," which exclamation was the salvation of Lorenzo and the ruin of that conspiracy.One cannot bring the thing to perfection when the conspiracy is against a head, for the causes said. But it easily fails of perfection when one conspires against two heads; indeed it is so difficult that it is impossible that it succeed. For to do the same action at one time in two different places is almost impossible; for one cannot do it at different times, since one does not wish the one to spoil the other.In such a mode that if to conspire against a prince is a dubious thing, dangerous and imprudent, to conspire against two is altogether vain and frivolous.But for reverence for the historian, I would never believe that what Herodian says of Plautianus were possible, when he commissioned Satuninus, the centurion, that he alone kill Severus and Antoninus, who lived in different countries; for the thing is so far from reasonable that only this authority could make me believe it.

Certain young Athenians conspired against Diocles and Hippias, tyrants of Athens.They killed Diocles; Hippias, who was left, avenged him.Chion and Leonidas of Heraclea, and disciples of Plato, conspired against the tyrants Clearchus and Satyrus; they killed Clearchus, but Satyrus remained alive to avenge him.The Pazzi, often cited by us, only succeeded in killing Giuliano.In such a mode that everyone ought to abstain from suchlike conspiracies against many heads, for it does no good for oneself, nor for the fatherland, nor for anyone.On the contrary, those who are left become more overbearing and harsher, as Florence knows -- and Athens, and Heraclea, as have been cited above by me.And it is true that the conspiracy that Pelopidas made to liberate Thebes, his fatherland, had all these difficulties -- nonetheless, it had a most successful end -- because Pelopidas not only conspired against two tyrants but against ten; not only was he not a confidant and it was not easy for him to have entry to the tyrants, but he was a rebel.Nevertheless, he was able to come to Thebes, kill the tyrants and liberate the fatherland.Still, however, he did it all with the aid of one Charon, counselor to the tyrants, through whom he had an easy entry to execute his [action].Nonetheless, no one should take his example, for that was an impossible enterprise and it was a marvel that it succeeded; so it has been held to be by the writers, who celebrate it as a rare thing and almost without example.Such execution can be interrupted by a false imagination or by an unforeseen accident that arises in its doing.On the morning that Brutus

and the other conspirators intended to kill Caesar, it befell that [Caesar] spoke at length with Gnaeus Popilius Lenas, one of the conspirators, and the others seeing him speak at length doubted whether the said Popilius had revealed the conspiracy to Caesar, and were for trying to kill Caesar there and not wait to do it in the Senate; and they would have done it had the discussion not ended and they saw Caesar making no extraordinary motion, and they were reassured.These false imaginings are to be taken into consideration and are to be held in prudent respect, and much more so since it is easy to have them; for he who has his conscience spotted easily believes that you speak of him.You can hear a word said for another purpose, and it disturbs your spirit, and believe that it is said about your case, and it makes you either reveal the conspiracy yourself by flight, or confuse the action by hurrying it before the [appointed] time.This very easily happens when there are many who are conscious[471] of the conspiracy.

As for accidents, because they are unexpected, one cannot demonstrate them except with examples and with them make men accordingly circumspect.Julio[472] Belanti of Siena, of whom we have made mention above, by the indignation he had against Pandolfo, who had taken away the daughter that he had previously given him as a wife, decided to kill him and chose the occasion as follows.Pandolfo went almost every day to visit a sick relative of his, and in going there passed the houses of Julio. The latter then, seeing this, ordered his conspirators to be at home in order to kill Pandolfo as he passed. He placed them armed within the entryway; with one at a window who, on Pandolfo's passing, would give a signal as he came near the entryway.It happened that as Pandolfo came and the signal having been given, he met a friend who stopped him and some of those who were with him passed through, going on ahead, and the noise of arms being seen and heard, they discovered the ambush, in such a mode that Pandolfo was saved, and Julio and his companions had to flee from Siena.The accident of that encounter impeded that action and resulted for Julio in the ruin of his enterprise.As for these accidents, because they are rare, one cannot have any remedy.And it is very necessary to examine all those that can arise and remedy them.

There remains at present only to dispute of the dangers that one runs after the execution; and these are only one, and this is when there remains someone who avenges the dead prince.There can remain his brothers or his sons, or other adherents, for whom the principate awaited.Those who may wreak vengeance can be left either through your negligence or through the

[471] *conscii*

[472] The name *Iulio* is given in the text; his name was in fact Luzio.

causes mentioned above, as happened to Giovanni Andrea da Lampognano, who, together with his conspirators, had killed the duke of Milan; and there remained one of his sons and two of his brothers who in time avenged his death.And truly in these cases the conspirators are excused, because they have no remedy; but when there remains someone alive because of their imprudence or negligence, then it is that they do not merit excuse.Some conspirators, Forliviese, killed their lord, the Count Girolamo, and took his wife and their children, who were little; and since it seemed to them that they could only be secure if they were masters of the fortress, and since the castellan was unwilling to turn it over to them, Madonna Caterina (for so the countess was called) promised the conspirators that if they let her enter it, she would have it consigned to them, and that they might keep the children with them as hostages.Under this faith they let her enter it; once inside she reproved them from the wall for the death of her husband and threatened them with every quality of vengeance.To show that she did not care about her children, she showed them her genitals, saying that she still had the means to make them again.And so, lacking in counsel and late to see their error, with a perpetual exile they suffered the penalty of their imprudence.But of all the dangers that can come to pass after the execution, there is none more certain nor that more to fear than when the people are friendly to the prince whom you have killed; for the conspirators have no remedy against this, for they can never secure themselves against [the people].For example, there is Caesar, who, by having the people friendly, was avenged by them; for the conspirators being driven out of Rome was the cause that they were all, at various times and at various places, killed.

Conspiracies that are made against the fatherland are less dangerous for [the conspirators] than those against princes, for in planning them there are fewer dangers than in the latter; in executing them there are the same; after the execution there is none.In planning them there are not many dangers, for one citizen can order himself for power without manifesting his spirit and plan to anyone, and if his orders are not obstructed,[473] his enterprise proceeds successfully; and if they are obstructed by some laws, to bide his time and enter by another way.This is understood [to apply] to a republic where there is, in part, some corruption, for in one not corrupted, there being no place where evil might begin, these thoughts cannot occur in one of its citizens.The citizens, then, can, by many means and many ways, aspire to the principate, and without the danger of being crushed; both because republics are more dilatory than a prince, are less suspicious, and therefore are less cautious; and because they have more respect for their great citizens, and

[473] *interrotti* -- lit., interrupted

therefore these are more audacious and more spirited in acting against them.Everyone who has read the conspiracy of Catiline written by Sallust knows that, after the conspiracy was discovered, Catiline not only stayed in Rome but came to the Senate and spoke rudely to the Senate and the Consul: so great was the respect that city had for its citizens.And when he had left Rome and was already with the armies, Lentulus and the others would not have been arrested had there not been letters in their own hand which manifestly indicted them.Hanno, a very great citizen of Carthage, aspiring to the tyranny, had ordered the whole Senate to be poisoned during the wedding-feast of one of his daughters, and afterwards to make himself prince.Upon learning of this thing, the Senate did nothing other than establish a law that placed limits on the expenses of banquets and wedding-feasts, so great was the respect they had for his qualities.But it is indeed true that in executing a conspiracy against the fatherland there is more difficulty and greater dangers, for rarely do your own forces suffice in conspiring against so many; and everyone is not a prince of an army, as was Caesar, or Agathocles, or Cleomenes, and their like, who have at one stroke and with their own forces seized the fatherland. For to suchlike [men] the way is very easy and very secure; but others who do not have such forces joined [with them], must needs make these plots either with deceit and art or with foreign forces.As for deceit and art, Pisistratus, the Athenian, having conquered the Megarians, and with this acquired the favor of the people, came outside wounded one morning saying that the Nobility had injured him through envy, and he asked that he be able to bring armed men about with him as his guard.With this authority he easily rose to such greatness that he became tyrant of Athens.Pandolfo Petrucci returned with other exiles to Siena, and he was given command of the guard of the piazza, as a base thing[474] that others had refused; nonetheless those armed men in time gave him so much reputation that in a short time he became prince.Many others have taken other expedients and other modes, and in the course of time and without danger they have conducted themselves [to their end].Those who with their own forces or with foreign armies have conspired to seize their fatherland have had varying results, according to fortune.Catiline, cited above, ruined himself and went under.Hanno, of whom we made mention above, not having succeeded with poison, armed several thousands of persons who were his partisans, and they and he were killed.Some of the first citizens of Thebes, in order to make themselves tyrants called in a Spartan army to aid them and seize the tyranny of that city.Such that, having examined all the conspiracies made against the fatherland, one does not find any, or few, that have been

[474] *cosa mecanica*

crushed while being planned, but all either succeed or are ruined in execution.When they are executed, then there are no other dangers than those a principate in itself bears by nature, for given that one is a tyrant, he has the natural and ordinary dangers that a tyranny brings along with it, for which he has no other remedies than those that have been discussed above.

This is as much as has occurred to me to write of conspiracies; and if I have reasoned of those that are done with iron and not with poison, it arises from their having all one and the same order.It is true that those [done] with poison are more dangerous by being more uncertain; for everyone does not have the opportunity, and one must needs confer with the one who has. and this necessity of conferring makes it dangerous for you.Then for many causes a drink of poison can be not fatal, as happened to those who killed Commodus: since he threw up the poison he had been given, they were forced to strangle him if they wanted him to die.Princes therefore have no greater enemy than conspiracy, for a conspiracy against them either kills them or brings them infamy.For if it succeeds, they die; if it is discovered and they kill the conspirators, it will always be believed that it had been invented by that prince to vent his avarice and cruelty against the blood and goods of those whom he has killed.I do not wish, however, to fail in warning that prince or that republic against whom a conspiracy has been made, that they take care that when a conspiracy is revealed to them, before they take up the enterprise of avenging it, to look into and understand very well its qualities, and to measure well the conditions of the conspirators and their own, and if they find it to be great and powerful, never to uncover it until they have prepared sufficient forces to crush it; to do otherwise would be uncovering their own ruin.They therefore ought use every expedient to conceal it; for the conspirators when they see themselves discovered, driven by necessity, act without respect.As an example, there are the Romans, who having left two legions of soldiers to guard the Capuans against the Samnites, as we have said elsewhere, the heads of those legions conspired together to oppress the Capuans. Rome, learning of the affair, commissioned Rutilius, a new consul, to oversee it.To keep the conspirators sleeping, he made it publicly known that the Senate reaffirmed the stationing of the Capuan legions.These soldiers believing it, and since it seemed to them that it gave them time to execute their plan, they did not try to hurry the plot, and thus they remained until they began to see the consul separate them one from the other; this [action] gave rise to suspicion in them, it made them reveal themselves and give orders for the execution of their desire.[475]Nor can there be a better example than this on either side; for one sees in it how slow men are in matters in

[475] *voglia* – Livy, VII 38-41.

which they believe they have time, and how quick they are when necessity drives them.Nor can a prince or a republic that wishes to delay the uncovering of a conspiracy to its advantage use better means than artfully to offer to the conspirators an opportunity in the near future, such that waiting for it, or it seeming to them that they have time, they give time to either that prince or that republic to punish them.He who has done otherwise has hastened his own ruin, as the duke of Athens did, and Guglielmo de' Pazzi.The duke, having become tyrant of Florence, and learning that a conspiracy had been made against him, without otherwise examining the thing, he arrested one of conspirators.That made the others immediately take up arms and deprive him of the state.When Guglielmo was a commissioner in the Val di Chiana in 1501, and had learned that there was in Arezzo a conspiracy favoring the Vitelli to take that town from the Florentines, he immediately went to that city, and without thinking of the forces of the conspirators or his own, and without his having any force ready, with the advice of the bishop, his son, arrested one of the conspirators.After that arrest, the others immediately took up arms and deprived the Florentines of the town; and Guglielmo, from a commissioner became a prisoner.But when conspiracies are weak, they can and ought to be crushed without respect. Nor should one in any mode imitate two means used, almost opposite one to the other. The one is that of the duke of Athens named above, who, in order to show his belief in the goodwill of the Florentine citizens, killed one of those who revealed to him a conspiracy.The other is that of Dion, the Syracusan, who, in order to test the mind[476] of someone whom he suspected, consented that Callipus, in whom he confided, pretend to make a conspiracy against him.Both of these two [modes] turned out badly; for the one took the spirit[477] out of accusers and gave it to those who wished to conspire.And the other gave an easy way to his death, since he was himself the head of the conspiracy against him; as in fact happened, for Callipus was able without respect to practise against Dion, [and] he so practised that he took from him the state and life.

7.Whence it arises that of changes from liberty to servitude and from servitude to liberty, some are without blood and some are filled with it.

Someone will perhaps doubt whence it arises that of many changes that occur from the free life to tyranny and the opposite, that some are done

[476] *animo*
[477] *animo*

with blood, and some without; for as one understands from the histories, in suchlike variations sometimes infinite [numbers] of men are killed, at other times no one is injured, as happened in the change that Rome made from King to Consuls, where no one was driven out except for the Tarquins, and no one else was harmed at all.[478]That depends upon the following: that state which is changed is born with violence or not; and when it is born with violence it must needs be born with injury to many, and it is necessary then that in their ruin the injured wish to avenge themselves, and from this desire of vengeance arises the blood and death of men.But when that state is caused by a common consensus of a universality that has made it great, there is no cause then -- when that said universality [falls into] ruin -- of harming anyone else but the head.The state of Rome and the expulsion of the Tarquins was of this kind, as also was the state of the Medici in Florence, for in their ruin in 1494 there was no one else harmed but they.Thus there do not come many dangers with such changes, but those are indeed most dangerous that are made by those who have to avenge themselves, and have ever been always of the kind to frighten, none other, one who does nothing but reads of them.And because histories are full of these examples, I wish to omit them.

[478] Livy, I 59-60.

8.He who wishes to change a republic ought to consider its subject {matter].

It has been discussed above how a bad citizen is not able to work ill in a republic that is not corrupt; which conclusion is strengthened, besides the reasons that we already mentioned, by the example of Spurius Cassius and Manlius Capitolinus.This Spurius, being an ambitious man and wishing to take extraordinary authority in Rome, and gaining the plebs to himself by giving them many benefits, such as dividing among them the fields that the Romans had taken from the Hernici, and his ambition was revealed by the Patricians which brought so much suspicion that when he spoke to the people, offering to given them the money that had been obtained from the grain that the public had brought from Sicily, they all refused it; for it seemed to them that Spurius wished to give them the price of their liberty.[479]But if that people had been corrupted that said price would not have been refused, and they would have opened that way to tyranny that they closed to him.Manlius Capitolinus is a greater example of this, for with him one sees how much virtue of mind[480] and body, what good deeds done for the sake of the fatherland, are cancelled afterwards by a base greed for ruling; which, as was seen, arose in him because of his envy of the honors that had been given to Camillus; and his mind[481] was so blinded that not examining the mode of life of the city, not examining the subject [matter] that it had, which was not apt for receiving a bad form, he set about to make tumults in Rome against the Senate and against the laws of the fatherland.Whence one recognizes the perfection of that city and the goodness of its matter, for in his case none of the Nobility, who were ardent defenders of each other, moved to favor him; none of his relations undertook an action[482] in his favor, while with other accused men [their relations] usually appeared meanly clothed, dressed in black, all in mourning, in order to attract compassion in favor of the accused, but with Manlius no one was seen.The Tribunes of the plebeians, who usually always favored the cases which appeared might result to the benefit of the people, and the more these were against the nobles the more they pushed them forward, in this case they united with the nobles to suppress a common pest.The people of Rome, it so happened, who were most desirous of their own advantage and were lovers of those affairs that went against the Nobility, had done many favors for Manlius; nonetheless, when the Tribunes charged him and remitted his cause to the judgment of the people, that people,

[479] Livy, II 41.
[480] *animo*
[481] *mente*
[482] *fece impresa* -- lit., made an enterprise.

having become judge instead of defender, without any respect condemned him to death.Therefore I do not believe that there is an example in this history more apt to show the goodness of all the orders of that Republic as is this one, seeing that no one of that city moved to defend a citizen full of every virtue, and who publicly and privately had done very many laudable works; for in all of them the love of the fatherland was more powerful than any other respect, and they considered much more the present dangers that proceeded from him than the merits of the past, such that with his death they liberated themselves.And Titus Livy says:"Thus was the end of a man who would have been memorable had he not been born in a free city."[483]Whence two things are to be considered: one, that it is by other modes that one seeks glory in a corrupted city than in one that is still living politically; the other (which is almost the same as the first), that men in their proceedings and much more in their great actions ought to consider the times and accommodate themselves to them.

Those who through bad choice or natural inclination are in discord with the times most often live unhappily and their actions end badly; and the contrary with those who are in concord with the time.Without doubt, through the words quoted above of the historian, one can conclude that if Manlius had been born in the times of Marius and Sulla, where the matter had already been corrupted, and where he could have imprinted the form of his ambition, he would have had the same results and successes that Marius and Sulla, and the others who after them aspired to the tyranny.Thus, similarly, had Sulla and Marius lived in the times of Manlius, they would have been crushed at the beginnings of their enterprises.For a man might very well begin with his modes and wicked means to corrupt a people of a city, but it is impossible that the life of one would suffice to corrupt it in such a mode that he himself might reap fruit from it.When it might well be possible with length of time that he do it, it would be impossible with respect to the mode of procedure of men, who are impatient and are unable long to defer a passion of theirs.They are therefore deceived in their affairs, and especially in those that they much desire; such that either because of little patience or because they deceive themselves they enter into an enterprise contrary to the time and they end badly.It is needful, therefore, in wishing to take authority in a republic and place on it a wicked form, to find the matter disordered by time, and that it has been conducted little by little and from generation to generation to disorder; and it is conducted there by necessity, when it has not, as has been discussed above,[484] often been refreshed by good

[483] *Hunc exitum habuit vir, nisi in libera civitate natus esset, memorabilia*. Livy, VI 20.
[484] *D* III 1.

examples or by new laws that return it towards its beginnings.Manlius would then have been a rare and memorable man, if he had been born in a corrupted city.Therefore citizens in republics who make any enterprise, either in favor of liberty or in favor of tyranny, ought to consider the subject [matter] that they have, and to judge by that the difficulty of their enterprises.For it is as difficult and dangerous to want to make a people free who wish to live slaves, as it is to want to enslave a people who wish to live free.And because it is said above that men in their workings ought to consider the qualities of the times and proceed according to them, we shall speak of them at length in the following chapter.

9. How one must needs change with the times, if one wishes always to have good fortune.

I have often observed how the cause of the ill and good fortune of men is in matching their mode of procedure with the times.For one sees that men proceed in their actions[485] some with impetuousness, some with respect and caution.And because in one or the other of these modes they pass the proper limits, not being able to observe the true way, and in one or the other an error is made.But he who comes to err less and to prosper in his fortune is he who matches, as I have said, the time with his mode, for one always proceeds as nature forces you.Everyone knows how Fabius Maximus proceeded with his army circumspectly and cautiously, far removed from any impetuousness and Roman audacity, and good fortune made his mode match well with the times.For since Hannibal had come to Italy young and with a fresh fortune, and since he already had twice routed the Roman people, and since that republic almost had been deprived of its good soldiers, and [it was] dismayed, it was not able to chance upon a better fortune than to have a captain who with his slowness and caution would keep the enemy at bay.Nor again could Fabius have matched the times more suitably to his modes, from which it arose that he was glorified.One sees that Fabius did this by nature and not by choice, for when Scipio wished to pass into Africa with his armies to end the war, Fabius was much against it, as one who could not break with his modes and habits.Such that if it had been left to him, Hannibal would still be in Italy, for he did not see that the times had changed and that a new mode of warfare was needed.If Fabius had been king of Rome, he could easily have lost that war, for he did not know how to change his procedure according as the times changed.[486]But having been born in a republic where

[485] *opere*
[486] LivyXXII 12, 18; XXVIII 40-42.

there were many diverse citizens and diverse humors, as Fabius was, who was best when the times needed that the war be sustained, so it was with Scipio when the times were apt for winning it.

Hence it arises that a republic has greater life and has good fortune longer than a principate, because it can better accommodate itself to the diversity of times, through the diversity of citizens that are in it, as a prince cannot.For a man who is accustomed to proceed in one mode never changes, as was said, and it must needs be of necessity that when the times change in disformity with his mode, he is ruined.

Piero Soderini, previously mentioned several times, proceeded in all his affairs with humanity and patience.He prospered, as did his fatherland, while the times were in conformity with his mode of procedure; but when the times came afterwards where he needed to break with patience and humility, he did not know how to do it; such that, together with his fatherland, he was ruined.Pope Julius II proceeded throughout the whole of his pontificate with impetuousness and fury; and because the times well-agreed with him, all his enterprises succeeded.[487]But had other times come that looked for other counsel, he would of necessity been ruined; for he would have changed neither mode nor order in his management.There are two things that are the causes as to why we are unable to change.One, that we are unable to oppose that to which nature inclines us; the other, that since one has much prospered with one mode of procedure, it is not possible to persuade him that he can do well by proceeding otherwise: whence it arises that with one man fortune changes, for she changes the times and he does not change the modes.Whence the ruin of cities also arises, by not changing the orders of republics with the times, as we have discussed above at length.[488]But they are slower, for they have more difficulty in changing; because it is needful that times come that affect the whole republic, and one alone does not suffice to change the mode of procedure.

And because we have made mention of Fabius Maximus who kept Hannibal at bay, I shall discuss in the following chapter if a captain, who wishes to give battle to the enemy in every mode, can be impeded by the latter from doing this.

10.That a captain cannot avoid battle when the adversary wishes to have it in every mode.

[487] See *Prince*, XXV.
[488] *D* I 18.

"Gneus Sulpitius,[489] the dictator, prolonged the war against the Gauls, not willing to commit himself to fortune against an enemy whom time and an alien place were daily making weaker."[490]When an error follows wherein all men or the greater part deceive themselves, I do not believe it to be bad to reprove it many times.Therefore, as I have shown many times above how actions regarding the great things are in disformity with those of the ancient times, nonetheless it does not seem to me to be superfluous at present to repeat it.For if in any part one deviates from ancient orders, one deviates especially in military actions, where none of those things that the ancients esteemed are at present observed.This inconvenience has arisen because republics and princes have imposed this care on others and in order to avoid dangers have kept themselves far from this exercise; and if one does sometimes see a king of our times go in person, it is not to be believed therefore that there might arise from him other modes that merit more praise.For when they indeed do that exercise, they do it for pomp and not for any other praiseworthy cause.Still these make fewer errors, lookingtheir armies in the face from time to time, and keeping for themselves the title of imperium that republics do not -- and especially the Italian ones, who, trusting these to others, do not understand anything that pertains to war; and on the other hand wishing, in order to appear be their prince, to deliberate on it, they make a thousand errors in such deliberations.Though I have some discussed some elsewhere, I wish at present not to be silent about a very important one.When these lazy princes or effeminate republics send out a captain of theirs, it seems to them that the wisest commission to give him is when they command him that by no means is he to give open battle, but, on the contrary, to guard himself, above everything else, from combat; since it seems to them that in this they imitate the prudence of Fabius Maximus, who, in deferring combat, saved the state of the Romans, not understanding that the majority of times this commission is nothing or harmful.For one ought to hold to this conclusion, that a captain who wishes to stay in the field, cannot avoid battle whenever the enemy wishes to make it in every mode.This commission is nothing other than to say: "Give battle at the convenience of the enemy, not your own."For if one wishes to stay in the field and not give battle, there is no other secure remedy than to put oneself at fifty miles distance at least away from the enemy, and then to have good spies, so that if he comes towards you, you have time to move away.There is another policy, to shut yourself up in a city: and either one of these two policies is very harmful.With the first, one leaves the countryside a prey for

[489] Gaius Sulpicius.
[490] Livy, VII 12.

the enemy, and a valiant prince will wish sooner to try the fortune of combat than to lengthen the war with such harm to his subjects.With the second policy, the loss is manifest; for it must needs be that when you lead an army into a city that you will be besieged, and in a short time suffer hunger and be brought to submission.Such that to avoid battle by these two ways is harmful in the extreme.The mode that Fabius Maximus took of staying in strong places is good when you have so virtuous an army that the enemy does not dare to come find you in the midst of your advantages.Nor can it be said that Fabius avoided battle, but rather that he wished to make it at his own advantage.For if Hannibal had gone to find him, Fabius would have awaited him and fought a battle with him; but Hannibal never dared to fight with him on his terms.So that battle was avoided as much by Hannibal as by Fabius; but if one of them had wished to give battle in every mode, the other would have had only one of three remedies: the two said above or flight.

That what I say is true, one manifestly sees from a thousand examples, and especially from the war the Romans had with Philip of Macedon, father of Perseus.For Philip, when assaulted by the Romans, decided not to engage in combat, and in order not to do it he wanted at first to do as Fabius Maximus had done in Italy; and he placed himself and his army on the summit of a mountain that he strongly fortified, judging that the Romans would not dare go to find him.But they went there and fought with him and they chased him from that mountain; and since he was not able to resist he fled with the greater part of his troops.What saved him from being wholly consumed was the iniquity of the country, which prevented the Romans from following him; since Philip did not wish to fight them, and being encamped next to the Romans, he had to flee.Having come to know by that experience that if one did not wish to fight then staying on the mountains would not suffice, and not wishing to enclose himself in towns, he decided to take the other mode, of staying many miles distant from the Roman camp.Hence, when the Romans were in one province, he went into another; and thus always wherever the Romans left, he entered.Seeing that in the end the lengthening of the war in this way worsened his conditions, and that his subjects were now oppressed by him and now by the enemies, he decided to try the fortune of combat, and thus came to a full battle[491] with the Romans.It is useful then not to fight, when the armies are under the conditions Fabius's army were, and again that Gnaeus Sulpicius had,[492] that is, to have an army so good that the enemy does not dare to come to find you within your fortresses, and that the enemy be in your home without having

[491] *giornata giusta* -- lit., a just or fair battle. Livy, XXXIII 7-10.
[492] Livy, VII 12-15.

gained much of a foothold and suffers the necessities of life.In this case it is a useful policy, for the reasons stated by Titus Livy, "He did not wish to commit his fortune against an enemy whom time and an alien place were daily making weaker."[493] But in every other circumstance, one is not able to avoid battle, except to your dishonor and danger.For to flee as Philip did is to be defeated, and it is the more shameful the less it has tested your virtue.And if he was successful in saving himself, it would not be successful for another if he were not aided by the country as [Philip] was.[494]That Hannibal was not a master[495] of war, no one will ever say; and when he encountered Scipio in Africa, had he seen an advantage in lengthening the war, he would have done it; and, perchance, since he was a good captain and had a good army, he could have done what Fabius did in Italy; but since he did not do it, one ought to believe that some important cause moved him.For a prince, who has an army assembled together, and who sees that because of the lack of money or friends that he cannot keep that army together long, is wholly mad if he does not try fortune before that army disperses; for if he waits his loss is certain, if he tries he might conquer.

There is also one other thing that is much to be considered here, which is that one ought, even in losing, to want to acquire glory, and there is more glory if one has been conquered by force than if you have been made to lose by some other inconvenience.Hannibal must have been constrained by these necessities.On the other hand, Scipio (if Hannibal had deferred battle and [Scipio] had not sufficient spirit[496] to go find him in strong places), would not have suffered, since he had already defeated Syphax and acquired so many towns in Africa that he could have stayed as securely and conveniently as if he were in Italy.This is not what happened with Hannibal when he was opposed to Fabius, nor with those French when they were opposed to Sulpicius.

Still less then can he avoid battle who with his army attacks the country of another; for if he wants to enter the enemy's country, he must fight when the enemy comes up against him.And if he encamps before a town, he is more obliged to fight; as in our times happened to Duke Charles of Burgundy, who, when encamped before Morat, a town belonging to the Swiss, was attacked by the Swiss and routed; and as happened to the army of France, who, when besieging Novara, was similarly routed by the Swiss.

---

[493] *Nolens se fortunae committere adversus hostem, quem tempus detriorem in dies, et locus alienus faceret.* Livy, VII 11.
[494] Cf. the judgment on Philip in *Prince*, XXIV.
[495] *maestro* -- also, a teacher.
[496] *animo*

11. That he who has to deal with many, even though he be inferior, if he yet can sustain their first attacks, wins.

The power of the Tribunes of the plebs in the city of Rome was great, and it was necessary, as has been discussed by us many times, for otherwise it would not have been able to rein in the ambition of the Nobility, which would have corrupted that republic long before it was corrupted.[497]Nonetheless, because in everything, as has been said many times, is hidden some evil of its own that gives rise to new accidents, it is necessary to provide for this with new orders.The tribunician authority having therefore become insolent and fearful to the Nobility and all Rome, it would have given rise to some inconvenience dangerous to Roman liberty, if Appius Claudius had not shown the mode by which they had a defense against the ambition of the Tribunes: which was that they could always find among [the tribunes] someone who was either fearful, or corruptible, or a lover of the common good, such that they could induce him to oppose himself to the will of those others who might have willed to push forward some deliberation against the will of the Senate.[498]This remedy was a great moderation of so much authority, and was useful to Rome many times.This has made me consider that whenever there are many powers united against another power, even though all together they are much more powerful than he, nevertheless one ought always to hope for more from that one who is alone and less strong than from those many, even though they are very strong.For, leaving aside all those things of which one alone can avail himself more than many (and they are infinite), this always will happen, that he will be able to use a little cunning[499] to disunite the many, and to make the body that was strong weak.I do not wish in this to adduce ancient examples, of which there have been many, but I wish modern ones, which have happened in our times, to suffice.

In 1483 all Italy conspired against the Venetians, and since they had lost everything and could no longer stay with an army in the field, they corrupted Signor Ludovico, who ruled Milan, and through that corruption made a treaty by which they not only recovered the lost towns but usurped part of the state of Ferrara.And so these who had lost in war remained supreme in peace.A few years ago the whole world conspired against France; nonetheless, before the end of the war could be seen, Spain broke away from the confederates and came to an accord with him, in such a mode that all the

[497] lit., when it was not corrupted.
[498] Livy, VI 37-42.
[499] *industria*

other confederates were constrained a little after also to make an accord themselves.So that, without doubt, one ought always to make this judgment, that when one sees a war began by many against one, that the one will remain superior, when he is of such virtue that he can sustain the first attacks, and by temporizing wait for an opportunity.For if he cannot do this, he then bears a thousand dangers, as happened to the Venetians in '08, who could have temporized with the French army and gained time to win over one of those who had gathered against them, and they might have avoided that ruin; but not having virtuous arms to enable them to temporize with the enemy, and because of this they did not have time to detach anyone, they were ruined.For one sees that the Pope, once he had his things back, made friends with them, and so did Spain; and one or the other of these two princes would have been very willing to save the state of Lombardy for them against France, in order not to make her so great in Italy, had they been able to do so.The Venetians then could have given part to save the rest; that is, if they had done it in time and before the start of the war, so that it would seem that it had not been done by necessity, it would have been a very wise policy;but after the start it was ignominious and probably of little profit.But before the start, few of the citizens in Venice could see the danger, very few could see the remedy, and no one advised it.But to return to the beginning of this discourse, I conclude: that as the Roman Senate had a remedy for the salvation of the fatherland from the ambition of the Tribunes, by their being many, so any prince who is attacked by many will have a remedy, whenever he will know with prudence how to use suitable means[500] to disunite them.

12.That a prudent captain ought to impose every necessity of fighting on his soldiers, and to take it away from those of the enemy.

We have at other times discussed how useful necessity is to human actions, and to what glory it has conducted them and that some moral philosophers have written that the two most noble instruments that ennoble man, the hands and tongue of men, would not have worked perfectly nor conducted human works to that height that one sees they have been conducted, if they had not been pushed by necessity.Ancient captains of armies having known then the virtue of such necessity, and how the minds[501] of soldiers become obstinate in fighting by means of it, they did all their works so that their soldiers would be constrained by it.On the other hand,

[500] *termini* -- lit., terms.
[501] *animi*

they used all their industry so that their enemies might be freed from it, and because of this they often opened to the enemy the way that they could have closed, and to their own soldiers they closed what they could have left open.Therefore one who desires that a city be defended obstinately, or that an army in the field fight obstinately, ought above everything else to contrive implanting such necessity into the breasts of those who have to fight.Whence a prudent captain, who has to go capture a city, ought to measure the ease or difficulty of capturing it, by learning and considering what necessity constrains its inhabitants to defend themselves.When he finds that great necessity constrains them to the defense, he judges capture difficult; otherwise he judges it easy.Hence it arises that towns after rebellion are more difficult to acquire than those that have not been acquired before; for, at the beginning, not having cause to fear punishment because they have done no offense, they easily yield;but later, when they have rebelled, since they are aware that they have offended and as a result fear punishment, they become difficult to capture.Such obstinacy also arises from the natural hatreds that neighboring princes and neighboring republics have one for the other:that proceeds from the ambition to dominate and the jealousy of their state, especially if they are republics, as happened in Tuscany; this competition and contention has made and will always make difficult the capture of one by the other.He who considers well, therefore, the neighbors of the city of Florence and the neighbors of the city of Venice, will not marvel, as many have, that Florence has spent more in wars and acquired less than Venice, for that wholly arises from the Venetians not having neighboring towns so obstinate in defense as Florence has had, since all the cities bordering on Venice are used to living under a prince and not being free; and those who are accustomed to serve often care little about having to change masters, indeed they often desire it.Such that Venice, although it had neighbors more powerful than Florence, by having found the towns less obstinate was able more quickly to conquer them than [Florence] could since it was surrounded by cities all of which were free.

A captain ought then, when he attacks a town, in order to return to the beginning of this discourse, to contrive with all diligence to relieve its defenders of such necessity and consequently of such obstinacy, promising pardon if they have fear of punishment; and if they fear for their liberty, to show that he goes not against the common good but against the few ambitious of the city.This thing has often facilitated enterprises and captures of towns. And although suchlike colorings are easily recognized, and especially by prudent men, nonetheless they often deceive peoples, who, longing for present peace, shut their eyes to whatever other snare there might

be under the large promises.In this way infinite cities have become slaves, as happened to Florence in recent times; and as happened to Crassus and his army, who, though he knew the Parthian promises to be vain, which had been made to take away from his soldiers the necessity of defending themselves, he still could not keep them obstinate, blinded by the offer of peace that had been made them by their enemy, as one may see in detail in reading his life.I say, however, that when the Samnites, outside of the conventions of the treaty, and because of the ambition of a few coursed and pillaged the fields of the Roman confederates, they afterwards sent ambassadors to Rome to ask for peace, offering restitution of the things pillaged and to give as prisoners the authors of the tumults and the pillaging, they were refused by the Romans.Having returned to Samnium without hope of an agreement, Claudius Pontius, captain at the time of the Samnite army, with one of his notable orations showed that the Romans wanted to have war in every mode, and though on their part they might desire to have peace, necessity made them have to go to war, and saying these words:"Just is the war that is necessary, and pious the arms when there is no hope but in arms,"[502] on that necessity he with his soldiers founded the hope of victory.In order not to have to return again to this matter, I shall adduce those Roman examples that are worthy of being noted. Gaius Manilius[503] was leading his army against the Veientes, and when part of the Veientian army entered the stockades of Manilius, Manilius with a company ran to their aid, and in order that the Veientians might not save themselves he occupied all the entrances to the camp; whereupon the Veientes, seeing themselves enclosed, began to fight with such fury that they killed Manilius, and would have overcome all the rest of the Romans, had not the prudence of a tribune not made open a way for them to leave.Whence one sees that while necessity constrained the Veientians to fight, they fought with great ferocity, but when they saw the way open they thought more of flight than of fighting.

The armies of the Volsci and the Aequi had entered into Roman confines. The Romans sent consuls against them.So that in the toil of battle, the army of the Volsci, whose head was Vettius Messius, found themselves at a stroke shut between their stockades, occupied by the Romans, and the other Roman army; and seeing how he must needs either die or make for himself a way with iron, he said these words to his soldiers:"Come with me, not to wall or ditch but armed men opposed to armed men; you are equals in

[502] *Iustum est bellum quibus necessarium, et pia arma quibus nisi in armis spes est.* Livy, IX 1. See *Prince*, 26.
[503] Gnaeus Manlius, not Gaius Manilius in Livy, II 47.

virtue, but superior in necessity, which is the last and greatest weapon."[504] Therefore that necessity is called by Titus Livy, "the last and greatest weapon."Camillus, the most prudent of all the Roman captains, who was already within the city of Veientes with his army, in order to facilitate its taking and to deprive the enemy of a last necessity of defending themselves, commanded, in such a mode that the Veientes heard, that they not harm those who were disarmed. So that, the arms being thrown down to earth, he captured that city almost without blood.[505]This mode was afterwards observed by many captains.

13.Where one might place one's trust, whether in a good captain who has a weak army, or in a good army which has a weak captain.

Coriolanus, having been exiled from Rome, went to the Volscians where he contracted for an army and, in order to avenge himself against his citizens, he set out for Rome.Whereupon he then withdrew, more because of piety for his mother than because of the forces of the Romans.[506]On this place [in the text] Titus Livy says: that from it one might come to know how the Roman republic grew more through the virtue of captains than of soldiers, considering how the Volscians in the past had been conquered, and they then won only when Coriolanus was their captain.[507]But though Livy has this opinion, nonetheless one sees in many places in his history where soldiers without a captain have given marvelous proofs of virtue, and have been more ordered and more ferocious after the death of their Consuls than before they had died; as happened to the army the Romans had in Spain under the Scipios, which, the two captains being dead, was able with its virtue not only to save its ownself but to overcome the enemy, and to preserve that province for the Republic.Such that, discussing the whole, one will find many examples in which the virtue of the soldiers alone will have won the day and many others in which the virtue of captains alone will have had the same effect; in such a mode that one can judge that each has need of the other.

It may be well here to consider first which is more to be feared: a good army badly captained or a good captain conjoined with a bad army.And

---

[504] *Ite mecum, non murus nec vallum, armati armatis obstant; virtute pares, quae ultimum ac maximumtelumest, necessitate superioris estis*. Livy, IV 28.

[505] Livy, V 21.

[506] *più per la piatà della su madre che per le forze de Romani* -- also, possibly, "more because of he plea of his mother than the forces of the Romans." But see Plutarch, *Lives*, "Comparison of Alcibiades and Coriolanus," iv.

[507] Livy, II 39.

following the opinion of Caesar in this, both are little to be esteemed.For upon his going to Spain against Afranius and Petreius, who had an excellent army, he said that he esteemed them little:"For he went against an army without leadership," indicating the weakness of the captains.On the contrary, when he went to Thessaly against Pompey, he said, "I go to a leader without an army."[508]

One might consider another thing: whether it is easier for a good captain to make a good army or for a good army to make a good captain.On this I say that the question seems to be settled; for more easily will many good either find or instruct one such that he becomes good, than one will many.Lucullus, when he was sent against Mithridates, he was wholly unpractised in war; nonetheless that good army, where there were many excellent heads, quickly made him a good captain.The Romans, for lack of men, armed many slaves and gave them to Sempronius Gracchus to train, who in a short time made a good army.[509]Pelopidas and Epaminondas, as we have said elsewhere, after they had delivered Thebes, their fatherland, from servitude to the Spartans, in a short time made the Theban peasants into excellent soldiers, and they were able not only to resist the Spartan militia but to overcome it.So the thing is about equal, for one that is good can find another.Nonetheless, a good army without a good head usually becomes insolent and dangerous, as happened with the Macedonian army after the death of Alexander, and with the veteran soldiers of the civil wars.Hence I believe that much more is a captain to be trusted who would have time to instruct men and commodity to arm them, than an insolent army with a head tumultuously chosen by them.Therefore one gives double the glory and praise to those captains who not only have overcome the enemy but, before they came hand-to-hand with him, it was necessary for them to instruct their army and make it good.For in these a double virtue is shown which is so rare, that if such a task were given to many, they would be much less esteemed and reputed than they are.

14.What effects are produced by new inventions that appear in the midst of battle and by new voices that are heard.

Of what moment in conflicts and battles is a new accident, which arises by some new thing seen and heard for the first time, is shown in many places, and especially by this example that happened during the battle the Romans were waging against the Volscians: when Quintius seeing one of the

[508] Suetonius, *Life of Caesar*, XXXIV.
[509] Livy, XXII 57; XXIV 14-16.

wings[510] of his army give way, began to shout loudly to them to stand firm because the other wing of the army was victorious.[511]With these words, having put spirit[512] into his own and dismayed the enemies, he won.And if on a well-ordered army the effects of such voices are great, on a tumultuous and badly ordered one they are very great, for the whole is moved by the same wind.I wish to adduce one notable example which occurred in our times.A few years ago the city of Perugia was divided into two parties, the Oddi and the Baglioni.The latter ruled, the others were exiled; and these, having by means of their friends, gathered an army, assembling it in some towns near Perugia, and with the aid of their partisans entered one night into that city, and without being discovered they seized the piazza.And because all the street corners of that city had chains that kept it barred, the Oddi host had a man in front with an iron mace breaking the locks so that the horses might be able to pass through, and only the one that opened into the piazza remained for him to break.The call to arms having already been raised, the one who was doing the breaking was so crushed by the crowd that had come behind him that he was not able to raise his arms to strike; and so, in order to manage it, he came to say:"Stand back there!"That voice went back through the ranks as saying, "Draw back!" and the rear ranks began to flee, and one after another the others, with such frenzy, that they defeated themselves.Thus the plan of the Oddi came to nothing because of so slight an accident.

Whence one is led to consider that good orders in an army are not only necessary to enable it to fight in an orderly way, but so that every little accident might not disorder you.For popular multitudes are useless in war for no other cause than that every noise, every voice, every uproar, changes them and makes them flee.Therefore a good captain, among his other orders, ought to order that there be those who take up his voice and deliver[513] it back to others, and accustom his soldiers to give credence only to these, and that his captain say nothing but that which has been commissioned by him; for when this part has not been well-observed, one has often seen it make for very great disorders.

As for seeing new things, every captain ought to contrive to make something appear, while the armies are hand-to-hand, that gives spirit to his own and takes it away from enemies, because among other accidents that give you victory, this is extremely efficacious.Of this one can adduce in testimony Gaius Sulpicius, the Roman dictator, who, when engaging in

---

[510] *corni* -- lit., horns
[511] Livy, II 64.
[512] *animo*
[513] *rimetterla*

battle with the French, armed all the pillagers and camp-followers[514] and, having made them mount mules and other pack-animals with arms and banners to seem to be cavalry, he placed them under banners behind a hill and commanded them, on a given signal, during the heat of combat, boldly to come out and show themselves to the enemy.This thing, so ordered and done, put such terror into the French that they lost the battle.[515]And therefore a good captain ought to do two things: one is to see to it that the enemy is dismayed with one of these new inventions; the other, is to be prepared when the enemy devises these against him so that he is able to discover them and make them turn to nothing, as the king of India did to Semiramis: she, seeing that the king had a good number of elephants, in order to frighten him and to show him that she also had them in abundance, constructed a number of them from the hides of buffalo and cows, and put them on camels which she sent ahead.But the king recognized the deceit, and made her scheme not only in vain but harmful.Mamercus, the dictator, was opposing the Fidenates who, in order to frighten the Roman army, ordered that in the ardor of the fight a number of soldiers should issue out of Fidenae with fire on their lances, so that the Romans occupied by the novelty of the thing might break the order.On this it is to be noted that when these inventions have more truth than fiction, then can one well stage them before men; for being sufficiently bold, one cannot discover so quickly their weakness.But when they have more of fiction than of truth, it is well either not to use them, or in using them to keep them at a distance, in such a quality that they cannot be so quickly discovered, as Gaius Sulpicius did with the muleteers.For if they have an inner weakness, it is immediately discovered when they are approached, and they harm you and do not help, as the elephants did to Semiramis and the fires to the Fidenates; although the latter at the beginning disturbed the army, nonetheless as the Dictator came up and began to shout to them saying that they not shame themselves by fleeing from smoke like bees, and that they should turn back against them, shouting:"With their flames destroy Fidenae, which you could not placate with your benefits."[516] And so that device turned out to be useless to the Fidenates, and they were left the losers of the combat.

15. That one and not many should be placed at the head of an army, and how several commanders do harm.

[514] *i saccomani e gente vile del campo* -- that is, those who followed the army to pillage the battlefield and the servants, sutlers, etc., or the servile and base folk of the camp.
[515] Livy, VII 14.
[516] *Suis flammis delete Fidenas, quas vestris beneficiis placare non potuistis.* Livy, IV 33.

The Fidenates having rebelled and killed the colony that the Romans had sent to Fidenae, to remedy this insult the Romans created four tribunes with consular power.Leaving one to guard Rome, they sent three against the Fidenates and the Veientes. These being divided among themselves and disunited, they brought back dishonor but without harm.As for the dishonor, they were the cause; as for no harm having been received, the virtue of the soldiers was the cause.Whence the Romans, seeing this disorder, had recourse to the creation of a Dictator, so that one alone might reorder what three had disordered.Whence one learns the uselessness of many commanders in an army or in a town that is to be defended; and Titus Livy could not say it more clearly than with the following written words:"Three Tribunes with consular power were a proof that a plural imperium in war is useless; each keeping to his own counsel, and the others thought otherwise, they gave the enemy a favorable opportunity."[517]And although this example suffices to prove the disorder made in war by several commanders, I wish to adduce some others, modern and ancient, for greater elucidation of this thing.

In 1500, after the king of France, Louis XII, had re-taken Milan, he sent his troops to Pisa to restore it to the Florentines; whereupon [the Florentines] sent there as commissioners Giovambatista Ridolfi and Luca di Antonio degli Albizzi.And because Giovambatista was a man of reputation and senior, Luca left the governance of everything wholly to him; and if [Luca] did not show his ambition by opposing him, he did so with silence and the neglect and contempt of everything, in such a mode that he did not aid the actions of the siege either with deeds or with counsel, as if he were a man of less moment.But one saw wholly the opposite afterwards, when Giovambatista, because of a certain accident that occurred, had to return to Florence; whereupon Luca, left alone, showed how much he was worth in mind,[518] skill, and counsel, all of which things, while he had a companion, were lost.I wish anew to adduce, in confirmation of this, words of Titus Livy, who, in relating that when the Romans sent Quintius and Agrippa his colleague against the Aequi, Agrippa wished that all the administration of the war might be borne by Quintius, says:"In the administration of great things it is most sound that the highest authority be in one."[519]The opposite of this is what is done today by our republics and princes, of sending to places, the better to administer them, more than one commissioner and more than one

[517] *Tres Tribuni potestate consulari documento fuere, quam plurium imperium bello inutile esset: tendendo ad sua quisque consilia, cum alii aliud videretus, aperuerunt ad occasionem locum hosti.* Livy IV.31.

[518] *animo*

[519] *Saluberrimum in administratione magnarum rerum est, summam imperii apud unum esse.* Livy III.70

head -- which makes for inestimable confusion.If one were to look for the causes of the ruin of Italian and French armies in our times, one will find the most potent to have been this one.And one might truly conclude that it is better to send on an expedition one man alone with common prudence[520] than two most able men together with the same authority.

16.That true virtue is sought after in difficult times; and in easy times, not virtuous men, but those who prevail through riches or parentage have more favor.

It always has been, and always will be, that great and rare men in a republic are neglected in times of peace; for the envy that has been drawn by the reputation that their virtue has given them.One finds in such times many citizens who wish not to be their equals but their superiors.Of this there is a good place in Thucydides, the Greek historian, which showns how the Athenian republic having been left the victor in the Peloponnesian War, and having reined in the pride of the Spartans and almost subjected all the rest of Greece, rose so much in reputation that it planned to seize Sicily.This enterprise came to be debated in Athens.Alcibiades and some other citizen counseled that it be done, as those who, thinking little of the public good, thought of their honor, planning to be the heads of such an enterprise. But Nicias, who was first among the reputed men of Athens, dissuaded against it, and the greatest reason he adduced in his address to the people in order that they might put faith in him, was this: that in counseling them not to make this war, he counseled something that was not done for his own sake, for if Athens stayed at peace he knew that there were innumerable citizens who wished to get ahead of him; but in going to war, he knew that no citizen would be superior or equal to him.[521]

You see then that there is this disorder in republics, of little esteeming worthy men in quiet times.This thing makes them indignant in two modes: one, in seeing themselves lack their rank; the other in seeing unworthy and less sufficient men made their associates and superiors.This disorder in republics has caused much ruin, for those citizens who unmeritedly see themselves disregarded, and know that the cause of it is easy times and not perilous, arrange to disturb them, stirring up new wars to the prejudice of the republic.And thinking what could be the remedies, I find two of them:one, to keep the citizens poor, so that riches without virtue cannot corrupt either themselves or others; the second, to order oneself as if one were at war so

[520] *comunale prudenzia* -- possibly: communal prudence.
[521] Thucydides, VI 8-24.

that one might always be able to wage war, and always has need of reputed citizens, as did the Romans in their first times.For always keeping armies outside that city, there was always a place for the virtue of men, nor could rank be taken away from one who merited it to be given to one who did not; for if this were actually done at times either by error or by way of testing, this immediately brought so much disorder and danger that she quickly returned to the true way.But other republics that are not ordered like her, and which make war only when necessity constrains them, are not able to defend themselves from such an inconvenience; on the contrary, they always incur it within; and there will always arise disorder, should that neglected and virtuous citizen be vindictive and have in that city some reputation and adherents.The city of Rome was defended for a time; but she also, when she had overcome Carthage and Antiochus (as was said elsewhere)[522] and no longer feared wars, it appeared that she could commit armies to whomsoever she wished, paying regard not so much to virtue as to the other qualities that give favor with the people.For one sees that Paulus Emilius was repulsed many times from the consulship, nor was he first made consul until the Macedonian War arose and, since it was judged dangerous, all the city by consensus commissioned it to him.

There having followed many wars after 1494 in our city of Florence, and the Florentine citizens having all made a bad showing, the city by chance found one who showed how one had to command armies, and that was Antonio Giacomini.While dangerous wars were waged, all the ambition of the other citizens ceased, and in the election of commissioner and head of the armies he had no competitor; but when the [city]waged a war where there was nothing to be doubted and much honor and rank, then he found so many competitors that when they elected three commissioners to besiege Pisa, he was left behind.Although one might not manifestly see the evil that followed to the public by [the city's] not having sent Antonio, nonetheless one can very easily make the conjecture; for the Pisans having nothing more to defend themselves or to live on, had Antonio been there they would have been so further straitened that they would have had to put themselves at the discretion of the Florentines.But since they were besieged by heads who did not know how to press them nor to force them, they kept going for so long that the city of Florence bought them off, when it could have had them by force.It must be supposed that Antonio's indignation must have been great, and it must needs be that he was very patient and good not to desire to avenge himself, either with the ruin of the city, if he could, or with injury to

[522] *D* I 18; II 1.

some individual citizen.From this a republic ought to guard itself, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

17.That one should not be given offense and then that same one be sent to an administrative and governmental [post] of importance.

A republic ought to give much consideration to not placing anyone at the head of any important administrative [post] to whom some notable injury has been done by others.Claudius Nero, who left the army which he had facing Hannibal and with part of it went to the Marches to find the other Consul, in order to fight with Hasdrubal before he joined up with Hannibal.Previously [Claudius] had found himself facing Hasdrubal in Spain, whom he had so shut in that place with his army such that he must needs either fight to his disadvantage or die of hunger, Hasdrubal astutely so took him in with certain terms of an agreement that he escaped from under and deprived [Claudius] of that opportunity to crush him.When this thing was known in Rome it brought him great blame from the Senate and the people, and they spoke of him indecently through all that city, and not without great dishonor and contempt for him.[523]But then being made Consul and sent to confront Hannibal, he took that above-written policy which was extremely dangerous, such that Rome stood all in doubt and excitement, until news came of the defeat of Hasdrubal.When Claudius was asked afterwards what had caused him, where there was not an extreme necessity, to gamble as it were with the liberty of Rome, he replied that he had done it because he knew that if he succeeded he would reacquire that glory that he had lost in Spain; and if he did not succeed, and his policy would have had a different end, he knew that he would have avenged himself against that city and those citizens who had so ungratefully and indiscreetly harmed him.[524]If these passions for such offenses could be great in a Roman citizen, and during those times when Rome was still incorrupt, one ought to think how much they might be in a citizen of another city that is not made as she was then.And because one can give no certain remedy to similar disorders that arise in republics, it follows that it is impossible to order a perpetual republic, because its ruin may be caused in a thousand unexpected ways.

18.Nothing is more worthy of a captain than to foresee the plans of the enemy.

[523] Livy, XXVI 17.
[524] Livy, XXVII. 40,45.

Epaminondas the Theban used to say that nothing was more necessary and more useful to a captain than to know the deliberations and plans of the enemy.[525]And because such knowledge[526] is difficult, the more praise he merits who employs it in such a mode that he conjectures them.Nor is it as difficult to understand the designs of the enemy as it is sometimes to understand his actions, and not so much the actions done by him from afar, as those in the present and near.For it has often come about that a battle lasting until nightfall, the one who has won believes he has lost, and the one who lost believes he has won.Such an error has led to things being determined contrary to the safety[527] of the one who has determined them, as happened to Brutus and Cassius who through this error lost the war; for while Brutus won on his wing, Cassius, who had lost, believed that the whole army had been routed and, despairing of salvation because of this error, killed himself.In our times, in the battle waged by Francis, king of France, with the Swiss in Lombardy at Santa Cecilia, night having overtaken them, that part of the Swiss that had remained intact believed themselves to have won, not knowing of those who had been routed and killed; that error brought it about that they did not save themselves, for they waited for morning to begin the combat again to their very great disadvantage: and it also made the army of the pope and Spain to err and this error brought it near to ruin; for this army, upon the false news of victory, crossed the Po, and if they had proceeded much farther they would have become prisoners of the French who had been victorious.

This same error occurred in the camps of the Romans and of the Aequi.[528]Sempronius, consul with the army, met the enemies and joined battle, and the battle was fought until evening with varying fortune for either side; and when night came, each of the armies being half-defeated, neither returned to their encampments.Instead each retired to near-by hills, where they believed they would be more secure.The Roman army was divided into two parts, one went with the Consul, the other with one Tempanius, a centurion, by whose virtue the Roman army had not been wholly defeated that day.When morning came, the Roman Consul, without learning anything more about the enemies, withdrew towards Rome.The army of the Aequians likewise withdrew, for each of them believed that the enemy had won, and therefore each retreated without concerning themselves that they left their camps as booty.It happened that Tempanius, who was with the rest

[525] Plutarch, *Moralia*,III, *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*, 187D, where the remark is attributed to Chabrias.
[526] *cognizione* -- lit., cognition.
[527] *salute* – also, salvation.
[528] Livy, IV 37-41.

of the Roman army, who was himself also retreating, heard from certain wounded Aequians that their captains had left and had abandoned their camps.Upon this news he entered the Roman camps and saved them, and then sacked those of the Aequi; and he returned to Rome victorious.That victory, as one sees, depended solely on who first heard of the disorders of the enemy.Whence one ought to note how it can often occur that two armies that are confronting one another may be in the same disorder and suffer the same necessity, and he who then is left the victor is the first to understand the necessities of the other.

I wish to give this one domestic and modern example.In 1438, when the Florentines had a large army before Pisa and were pressing that city hard, the Venetians who had undertaken its protection, not seeing any other mode of saving it, decided to divert the war by attacking the dominion of Florence from another side.And raising a powerful army they entered through the Val di Lamona and occupied the village of Marradi and besieged the fortress[529] of Castiglione that was on the hill above.Upon hearing of this, the Florentines decided to relieve Marradi and not diminish the forces that they had before Pisa: new infantry was raised and new cavalry organized, of whom Jacopo IV of Appiano, lord of Piombino, and the Count Rinuccio da Marciano, were made heads -- and they sent them in that direction. When these troops were then conducted to the hill above Marradi, the enemies raised themselves from within Castiglione and retired completely into the village.These armies stayed confronting each other for some days, both suffering much for victuals and every other necessary; and each not daring to attack the other, each not knowing the disorders of the other, they decided the same evening to remove from their camps the coming morning and to retire: the Venetians towards Bersighella and Faenza, the Florentines towards Casaglia and the Mugello.When morning then came, and each of the camps had begun to send off their baggage, by chance a woman left the village of the Marradi and came to the Florentine camp, safe because of her old age and poverty, desiring to see certain relatives who were in that camp.Upon hearing from her that the Venetian camp had left, the captains of the Florentine troops were made bold by the news and, changing their plan, they went towards the [enemy] as if they had dislodged them, and they wrote to Florence that they had driven them back and won the war.That victory arose from nothing else than of having heard, before their enemies, of the other's leaving:that information, if it had first come to the other side, would have had the same effect against ours.

[529] *rocca* -- lit., rock.

19.If, in ruling a multitude, compliancy[530] is more necessary than punishment.

The Roman republic was agitated by the enmities between the nobles and the plebeians; nonetheless with war impending upon them, they sent out Quintius and Appius Claudius with armies.Appius, being cruel and rude in command, was badly obeyed by his [men], such that he fled from his province almost defeated.Quintius, being of a benign and humane genius, had his soldiers obedient, and carried off the victory.Whence it would seem to be better, in governing a multitude, to be humane rather than proud, piteous[531] rather than cruel.Nonetheless, Cornelius Tacitus, with whom many other writers agree, in one sentence of his concludes the contrary, when he affirms:"In ruling a multitude punishment avails more than compliancy."[532]Considering how one might be able to save both these opinions, I say:either you have to rule men who ordinarily are your companions, or men who are always your subjects.When you are companions, one cannot simply use punishment or that severity that Cornelius discusses:and because the Roman plebs had in Rome equal imperium with the Nobility, one who became prince for a time could not manage them with cruelty and roughness.And one sees that many times better fruit was brought forth by Roman captains who made themselves loved by their armies, and when they managed them through compliancy, than by those who made themselves extraordinarily feared; unless they were accompanied by an excessive virtue as was Manlius Torquatus.But whoever commands subjects, of which Cornelius reasons, in order that they not become insolent and that they not too easily trample upon you, ought to turn rather to punishment than to compliancy.But this ought also to be done in a moderate way if one is to avoid hatred; for to be hated never does any prince any good.The way of avoiding it is to leave the property of his subjects alone; for, when rapine is not hidden under it, no prince desires blood unless he is necessitated to do so, and this necessity comes rarely; but when it is mixed with rapine, it always comes, and the causes and desire are never lacking for bloodshed: as has been shown at length in another treatise upon this matter.Quintius then deserved more praise than Appius; and the

---

[530] *ossequio* -- From the Latin *obsequium*, derived from *obsequor* meaning to be yielding, compliant, favorable and gracious in a superior; and in an inferior to be obedient, subservient, or obsequious.

[531] *pietoso* -- which can be translated as "pious" as well as "merciful". See *Prince*, XVII.

[532] *In multitudine regenda plus poena quam obsequiuum valet.* This passage does not occur inTacitus. See the *Annals* III.55.5, which reads: "For deference to the emperor and the wish to imitate him were more effective than legal prattles and threats."

saying of Cornelius, within its terms, and not in the cases observed by Appius, deserves to be approved.

And because we have spoken of punishment and compliancy, it does not seem to me to be superfluous to show how an example of humanity was able to do more with the Falisci than arms.

20.An example of humanity towards the Falisci was able to do more than every Roman force.

When Camillus had surrounded the city of the Falisci and was besieging it, a teacher of a school of the noblest boys of that city, thinking of ingratiating himself with Camillus and the Roman people, under color of exercise took the [boys] outside the town and conducted them all into the camp before Camillus, and offering them said that by means of them the town would give itself into his hands.That offer was not only not accepted by Camillus, but he had the teacher stripped, binding his hands behind him, and having put a rod into the hands of each of the boys, he made them follow him with many blows back into the town.When the citizens heard of it, they were so pleased with the humanity and integrity of Camillus that, without wishing any longer to defend themselves, they decided to give him the town.[533]From this true example there arises the consideration that sometimes an humane act and one full of charity can do more in the minds[534] of men than a ferocious and violent act; and that many times those provinces and those cities that arms, instruments of wars, and every other human force, have not been able to open, an example of humanity and of piety, of chastity or of liberality, has opened.Of this there are many other examples in the histories.And one sees how Roman arms could not drive Pyrrhus from Italy, and he was driven out by the liberality of Fabricius, when he revealed to [Pyrrhus] the offer that had been made to the Romans by a familiar of his to poison him. One sees too how the taking of New Carthage did not gain Scipio Africanus as much reputation in Spain as did that example of chastity of having given back the young wife, beautiful and untouched, back to her husband; the fame of that action gained him the friendship of all of Spain.[535]One also sees how much is this part in great men desired by peoples, and how much praised it is by writers, both by those who describe the lives of princes and by those who order how these ought to live.Among these, Xenophon labors much to demonstrate how many honors, how many

[533] Livy, V 27.
[534] *animi*
[535] Livy, XXVi 46, 50.

victories, how much good fame was ascribed to Cyrus by his being human and affable, and giving no example of him as proud, or cruel, or luxurious, or of any other vice that stains the life of men.Still, all the same, since one sees that Hannibal with modes contrary to these attained to great fame and great victories, it seems to me [I should] discuss in the following chapter whence this arises.

21.Whence it arises that Hannibal with modes of procedure different from those of Scipio brought about the same effects in Italy as the latter did in Spain.

I reckon that some might marvel seeing how some captain, notwithstanding that he had taken an opposite [way of] life, have nonetheless brought about the same effects as those who have lived in the mode written above.Hence it seems that the cause of victories does not depend on the previously mentioned cause, but rather it seems that these modes do not bring you either more forces or more fortune, since one can by contrary modes acquire glory and reputation.In order that I might not depart from the above-written men, and in order better to clarify what I have wished to say, I say that one sees Scipio entering Spain and, with that humanity and piety of his, quickly makes that province friendly to him, and to be adored and admired by the peoples.[536]One sees on the other hand Hannibal entering into Italy and, with wholly opposite modes, that is with violent cruelty and rapine and every kind[537] of infidelity, bring about the same effect that Scipio had in Spain; for all the cities of Italy rebelled in his favor, all the peoples followed him.[538]

Thinking on whence this thing could arise, one sees within it several reasons.The first is that men are desirous of new things, so much so that the well off desire novelty often as much as those who are badly off; for, as has been said elsewhere and it is true, men become bored in good [times] and anxious in bad.This desire makes them open the doors to anyone who in a province puts himself at the head of an innovation:and if he is a foreigner, they run after him; and if he is of the province, they come around him, increasing him and favoring him; such that, in whatever mode he proceeds, he succeeds in making great progresses in these places.Besides this, men are driven by two principal things, either by love or by fear, such that he who makes himself loved commands just as much as he who makes himself feared;

[536] Livy, XXVII 20.
[537] *ragione* -- lit., reason.
[538] Livy, XXII 54, 61.

although most of the time he who makes himself feared is better followed and better obeyed than he who makes himself loved.

It imports little, therefore, to a captain as to which of these ways he walks, provided that he be a virtuous man and gains himself a reputation among men with that virtue.For when it is great, as it was in Hannibal and Scipio, it cancels all those errors that are made by making oneself loved too much or feared too much.[539]For from one or the other of these two modes there can arise great inconveniences, and apt to ruin a prince.For he who desires too much to be loved, if he strays but a little from the true way, he becomes contemptible; on the other hand, he who desires to be much feared, if he exceeds the mode but a little, he becomes hated.And one cannot keep precisely to the middle way, for our nature does not consent to it, but it is necessary that those things that are excessive be mitigated by an excessive virtue, as did Hannibal and Scipio.Nonetheless, one sees how both were harmed by their modes of living, and how they were exalted.

The exaltation of the two of them has been described.The harm, as for Scipio, was that his soldiers, together with some of his friends, rebelled against him in in Spain.[540]The affair arose from nothing else than his not being feared; for men are so restless that however little the door is opened to their ambition, they forget immediately all the love that they have placed on the prince because of his humanity, as was done by the aforesaid soldiers and friends.Such that Scipio, in order to remedy this inconvenience was constrained to use some of that cruelty that he had avoided.As for Hannibal, there is no particular example where that cruelty and little faith of his did him harm.But one can well presuppose that Naples, and many other towns who stayed faithful to the Roman people, did so because of fear of him.One does see this, that his impious mode of life made him more hated by the Roman people than any other enemy that the Republic ever had.[541]In such a mode that where they revealed to Pyrrhus, while he was with his army in Italy, the one who wished to poison him, they never forgave Hannibal, even though he was disarmed and exiled;[542] such that they brought about his death.[543]These disadvantages arose for Hannibal, then, because he was held to be impious and a breaker of faith and cruel; but there resulted a very great advantage to him, which is admired by all the writers:that in his army,

---

[539] See *Prince* , XVII.
[540] Livy, XXVIII 28.
[541] Livy, XXI 1.
[542] *disperso* -- which may be interpreted either that he was exiled or that his army had been dispersed.
[543] Livy, XXXIX 51.

although it was composed of different kinds[544] of men, there never arose any dissension either among themselves or against him.That cannot have resulted from anything other than the terror that arose from his person.That was so great, that mixed with reputation that his virtue gave him, it kept his soldiers quiet and united.I conclude then that it is of not much importance in which mode a captain proceeds, provided that there be great virtue in him that flavors well either mode of life.For, as has been said, in either there is defect and danger, when an extraordinary virtue does not correct it.And if Hannibal and Scipio, the one with laudable things, the other with detestable, brought about the same effect, it does not seem to me that [I should] omit the discussion also of two other Roman citizens, who gained with diverse modes, both of which were laudable, one and the same glory.

22. How the harshness of Manlius Torquatus and the humanity of Valerius Corvinus acquired for each one the same glory.

There were in Rome at one and the same time two excellent captains, Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvinus, who, with equal virtue, equal triumphs and glory, lived in Rome: and each of them, as far as it appertained to the enemy, acquired with equal virtue; but as it appertained to the armies and the treatment of soldiers, they proceeded very diversely.For Manlius commanded them with every kind of severity, without any pause in the toil and punishment of his soldiers.Valerius, on the other hand, kept them[545] with every human mode and circumstance, and full of a familiar domesticity.For one sees that to have the obedience of the soldiers, the one killed his son, and the other never harmed anyone.Nonetheless, with diversity of proceeding each one had the same fruit against enemies and in favor of the republic and of himself.For no soldier ever refused battle, or rebelled against them, or differed in any way from their will, although the commands[546] of Manlius were so harsh that all other commands that exceeded the mode were called "Manlian commands."[547] Whence one is to examine first, how it came about that Manlius was constrained to proceed so rigidly; the other, how it happened that Valerius could proceed so humanely; next, what was the cause of these diverse modes having the same effect; and, lastly, which is the better and more useful to imitate.If anyone considers well the nature of Manlius,

[544] *generazioni* -- that is, of different nations and stocks.
[545] *gl'intratteneva* -- lit., he entertained them. *Intrattenimenti* is the term also used above, in the phrase translated as "treatment of the soldiers." Livy VIII.8
[546] *imperi* -- that is, commands arising from the imperium or supreme administrative power.
[547] Cf. Livy, VIII 7.

from the time that Titus Livy begins to make mention of that, he will see that he was a very strong man, pious towards his father and his fatherland and very reverent towards his superiors.These things are known from the death of that Frenchman, the defense of his father against the Tribune, and how before he went to fight with the Frenchman, he went to the Consul with these words:"Without your command, I will never fight against the enemy, not even if I see victory to be certain."[548]A man so made coming then to a rank of command, desires to find all men like himself, and his strong spirit[549] makes him command strong things; and when they are commanded he wishes that they be completely observed.And it is a very true rule that when harsh things are commanded, one must needs make them observed with harshness; otherwise you would find yourself deceived.Whence it is to be noted that for one who wishes to be obeyed, it is necessary to know how to command, and those know how to command who compare their qualities with whoever has to obey, and if they see that there is a proportion then they command; if there is a disproportion they abstain from it.

Therefore a prudent man said that to maintain a republic by violence there must needs be a proportion between one who forces with the one who is forced:and whenever there is this proportion, one can believe that the [use of] violence will be lasting; but if the one to whom violence is done is stronger than the violent, one can be in doubt every day that the violence might be stopped.

But turning to our discourse, I say that to command strong things one must needs be strong, and he who is of this strength, and who commands them, cannot then with gentleness[550] make them observed.But he who has not this strength of spirit,[551] ought to keep himself away from extraordinary commands, and with ordinary ones he can use his humanity; for ordinary punishments are not imputed to the prince but to the laws and these orders.One ought believe then that Manlius was constrained to proceed rigidly because of his extraordinary commands, to which his nature inclined him; and these are useful in a republic because it returns its orders toward their beginning and to its ancient virtue.If a republic could be so happy that it could often have, as we have said above,[552] one who by his example renewed its laws, and not only kept it from running on to ruin but pulled it backwards, it would be perpetual.So that Manlius was one of those who with the harshness of his commands kept military discipline in Rome, constrained

---

[548] *Iniussu tuo adversus hostem numquam pugnabo, non si certam victoriam videam.* Livy, VII 10.
[549] *animo*
[550] *dolcezza* -- also, sweetness, mildness.
[551] *fortezza d'animo*
[552] *D* III 1.

first by his nature, then by the desire he had that what his natural appetite had made him order should be observed.On the other side, Valerius could proceed humanely, for with him it sufficed that the things customarily observed by Roman armies be observed.That custom, because it was good, sufficed to honor him, and it was not difficult to observe it, and Valerius was not necessitated to punish the transgressors, because there were none, and because if there had been, they would have imputed, as was said, their punishment to the orders [of the republic] and not to the cruelty of the prince.In such a mode, Valerius could make every humanity arise from himself, from which he could acquire rank with the soldiers and their satisfaction.Whence it arises that both having the same obedience, they could, working diversely, bring about the same effect.Those who would wish to imitate them might fall into those vices of contempt and hatred that I mention above concerning Hannibal and Scipio, that one avoids by an excessive virtue that is in you and not otherwise.

It remains now to consider which of these two modes of procedure is more praiseworthy, which I believe is debatable, for the writers praise both modes.Nonetheless those that have written how a prince should govern himself incline more to Valerius than to Manlius; and Xenophon, previously cited by me,[553] giving many examples of the humanity of Cyrus, much conforms himself to what Titus Livy says of Valerius.For having been made Consul against the Samnites, and the day coming when he had to fight, he spoke with his soldiers with that humanity with which he governed them, and after that speech Titus Livy says these words:"No leader was more familiar with his soldiers, cheerfully sharing with the lowest of soldiers all the hard labor.At the military games also, in which equals contend with one another in swiftness and strength, with easy affability he won and lost without changing [countenance]; nor did he disdain to match himself with anyone who offered; he made his kindness fit the circumstances; his speech was no less mindful of the liberty of others as his own dignity, and (than which nothing is more popular) his practice was the same in the exercise of the magistracy as when he sought it."[554]Titus Livy speaks in the same way of Manlius, respectfully showing that his severity in the death of his son made the army very obedient to the Consul, which was the cause of the victory

[553]*D* II 13, III 20.

[554]*Non alias militi familiarior dux fuit, inter infimos milites omnia haud gravate munia obeundo. In ludo praeterea militari, cum velocitatis viriumque inter se aequales certamina ineunt; comiter facilis vincere ac vinci vultu eodem: nec quemquam aspenari parem qui se offeret; factis benignus pro re, dictis haud minus libertatis alienae quam suae dignitatis memor, et (quo nihil popularius est) quibus artibus petieratmagistratus, iisdemgerebat.* Livy, VII 33.

that the Roman people had over the Latins.[555]He so proceeds in praising him that after such a victory, having described the whole order of that battle, and having shown all the dangers that the Roman people had run, and the difficulties that they had in winning, he comes to this conclusion, that only the virtue of Manlius gave that victory to the Romans.And making a comparison of the forces of both armies, he affirms that the side which had the Consul Manlius would have won.[556]So that, having considered all what the writers have said, it would be difficult to judge [between] them.Nonetheless, in order not leave this part undecided, I say that in a citizen who lives under the laws of a republic, I believe the procedure of Manlius to be more praiseworthy and less dangerous; for this mode is wholly in favor of the public, and has no regard in any part for private ambition.For with such a mode one cannot acquire partisans, for one shows oneself as harsh with everyone and as loving only the common good; for he who does this does not acquire for himself particular friends which we call, as was said above,[557] partisans.Such that similar modes of procedure cannot be more useful nor more desirable in a republic, for [such a mode] does not lack public utility and there cannot be in it any suspicion of private power.But it is the contrary with the mode of procedure of Valerius; for if it does good with respect to the public it brings about the same effects; nonetheless there arise many doubts, because of the particular goodwill that he acquires with the soldiers, that a prolonged imperium might bring about bad effects against liberty.

If with Publicola these bad effects did not come about, the cause of that was that the minds[558] of the Romans were not yet corrupt, and he did not have a long and continuous government.But if we have to consider a prince, as Xenophon did consider, we would have to incline wholly to Valerius, and abandon Manlius; for a prince ought to seek in his soldiers and in his subjects obedience and love.He gets obedience from his being an observer of the orders and his being held to be virtuous; he gets love from his affability, humanity, piety, and other parts that were in Valerius and which Xenophon writes as being in Cyrus.For to be a prince well-liked as an individual, and to have his army his partisan, conforms with all the other parts of his state; but for a citizen to have an army as his partisan, this part does not at all conform with all the other parts that make him have to live under the laws and obey the magistrates.

---

[555]*D* II 16.
[556] Livy, VIII 7-10.
[557]*D* I 43.
[558]*animi*

One reads in the ancient things of the Venetian Republic that when a Venetian galley returned to Venice there arose certain differences between those on the galley and the people.Whereupon the tumult came to arms, and neither the force of ministers, nor reverence for the citizens, nor fear of the magistrates, could quiet the thing, when suddenly a gentleman, who had been their captain a year before, appeared before those sailors and through love of him they were parted and abandoned the fight.This obedience generated such suspicion in the Senate, that a little afterwards the Venetians, either through prison or through death, assured themselves of him.I conclude then that the procedure of Valerius is useful in a prince and pernicious in a citizen not only to the fatherland but to himself: to the [fatherland] because these modes prepare the way to tyranny; and to himself because his city, in suspecting his mode of procedure, is constrained to assure herself to his harm.And thus, on the contrary, I affirm the procedure of Manlius to be harmful in a prince, and in a citizen useful, and especially to the fatherland; and it also rarely harms, unless indeed this hatred your severity brings upon you increases the suspicion which your other virtues, through their great reputation, bring upon you, as will be discussed below of Camillus.

23. For what cause Camillus was driven from Rome.

We have concluded above that by proceeding like Valerius one harms the fatherland and oneself, and by proceeding like Manlius one aids the fatherland and sometimes harms oneself. That is proved very well by the example of Camillus, who, in his procedure, resembled Manlius rather than Valerius. Whence Titus Livy in speaking of him says that: "the soldiers hated and admired his virtue."[559]

What made him held to be marvelous was the solicitude, prudence, greatness of spirit, the good order he used in his management and command of armies. What made him hated was his being more severe in his punishment of them than liberal in remunerating them. Titus Livy adduces these causes for this hatred: the first, that he applied to the public the moneys taken from the property of the Veientes, which were sold and not distributed with the booty; next, that in the triumph he had his triumphal chariot drawn by four white horses, whence it was said of him that in his pride he wished to compare himself with the Sun; thirdly, that he made a vow to give Apollo the tenth part of the booty [taken] from the Veientes, and wishing to satisfy the vow, he had to take from the hands of the soldiers what they had already seized. From which it is well and easily noted what those things are which

[559] *Eius virtutem milites oderant et mirabantur*. Livy, V 26.

make a prince odious to his people; among these the principal one is to deprive them of something useful. This is of such importance, for things that have some utility in themselves, when man is deprived of them, he never forgets it, and the least necessity makes you remember it; and because necessities come daily, you daily remember it. The other thing is to appear proud and inflated, which cannot be more odious to peoples, and especially the free. And although this pride and pomp may not give rise to any disadvantage for them, nonetheless they hate him who displays it. From this a prince ought to guard himself as from a rock; for to draw hatred upon himself without his profiting is wholly a temerarious and imprudent part.

24. The prolongation of commands[560] made Rome a slave.

If one considers well the procedure of the Roman Republic, one will see two things to have been the cause of the dissolution[561] of that Republic; one was the contentions that arose from Agrarian Laws; the other the prolongation of commands. These things, if they had been better understood from the beginning, and proper remedies found, the free life would have been longer and perhaps quieter. Although, with respect to the prolongation of imperium, one does not see that it ever gave rise in Rome to any tumult, one sees nonetheless in fact how much harm is done to the city by that authority the citizens obtain by such deliberations. If the other citizens whose magistracy was extended had been wise and good as was Lucius Quintius, this inconvenience would not have occurred. His goodness is shown by a notable example: for the Plebs and Senate having made a treaty of concordance, and the Plebs having prolonged for one year the imperium of the Tribunes, judging them apt for resisting the ambition of the nobles, the Senate wished, out of rivalry with the Plebs and in order not to appear less than they, to prolong the consulate of Lucius Quintus;[562] and he wholly rejected this deliberation, saying that with bad examples one wanted to look to extinguish them, not to increase them with another worse example; and he wished that they would make new Consuls. That goodness and prudence, had it been in all Roman citizens, would not have permitted the introduction of that custom of prolonging magistracies, and there would not have arisen from that the prolongation of commands, a thing that in time ruined that Republic. The first for whom the imperium was extended was Publius

[560] *imperii* – the imperium is the jurisdiction and tenure of a command, which included the interpretation and execution of the laws within that command.
[561] *risoluzione* -- lit., resolution, i.e. the process of breaking it up into its constituent elements or parts.
[562] Cincinnatus. Livy, III 21.

Philo,[563] whose consulate came to an end as he was besieging the city of Palaeopolis; and since it appeared to the Senate that he had victory in hand, it did not send out a successor but made him Proconsul; and he was thus the first Proconsul. This thing, even though in doing it the Senate was moved by public utility, was that which in time made Rome a slave. For the farther the Romans went with their armies, the more necessary the extension of their [commands] seemed, and the more they used it. This made for two inconveniences: one, the fewer number of men who exercised the commands, and it arose from this that reputation was restricted to few; the other, that a citizen having been in command of an army for a long time, gained it for himself and made it his partisan: for that army in time forgot the Senate and recognized him as head. Because of this, Sulla and Marius were able to find soldiers who followed them against the public good; because of this, Caesar could seize the fatherland. Had the Romans never prolonged the magistracies and the commands, they would not have come so quickly to such power; and if their acquisitions had come later, they would also have come later into servitude.

25. Of the poverty of Cincinnatus and of many other Roman citizens.

We have reasoned elsewhere[564] that the most useful thing to be ordered in a free life is what keeps the citizens poor. Though in Rome it does not appear what that order was that brought about this effect, the agrarian laws having had so much opposition, nonetheless by experience one sees that four hundred years after Rome had been built, there was very great poverty there. Nor can one believe that any other order did more to bring about this effect than to see that poverty did not bar you from the way to whatever rank or whatever honor, and that virtue was sought in whatever house it dwelt. That mode of life made riches less desirable. One manifestly sees this, for when the consul Minutius with his army was besieged by the Aequi, so filled was Rome with fear that that army might be lost, that they had recourse to the creation of a Dictator, the ultimate remedy in things afflicting [them], and they created Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, who was found in his small villa, which he worked with his own hands. Titus Livy celebrates this affair with golden words, saying: "What was done is worth hearing by those who despise all human things in comparison with riches, nor give much place to honor or to virtue, unless wealth flows in

[563] Livy, VIII 23. The name in Livy is Publilius Philo.
[564] *D* I.37; II.6, 19; III.16.

abundance."[565] Cincinnatus was ploughing his little villa, whose limits did not exceed more than four *jugera*,[566] when the Legates from the Senate came from Rome to make known to him his election to the dictatorship, and to show him in what danger the Roman republic found itself. Taking his toga, he came to Rome and assembled an army, and went to liberate Minutius; and having defeated and despoiled the enemies and liberated the latter, he did not want the besieged army to share in the spoils, and he said these words to [Minutius]: "I do not want you to share in the spoils [taken from] those who were about to despoil you." He deprived Minutius of the consulate and made him a Legate, saying to him: "Remain in this rank until you learn to know how to be Consul." He made Lucius Tarquinius his Master of Horse who, because of his poverty, soldiered on foot. One notes, as was said, the honor that was given in Rome to poverty, and that for a good and worthy man, as Cincinnatus was, four *jugera* of land[567] sufficed to nourish him. One sees that there was still that poverty in the times of Marcus Regulus, for when he was in Africa with the armies, he asked permission from the Senate to return to take care of his villa which was being ruined by his laborers. Whence one sees two very notable things: one, the poverty, and how they were content in it, and how it sufficed for these citizens to get honor from war; and all the profit they left to the public. For if he had thought of becoming rich from war, he would have cared little that his fields were being ruined. The other is to consider the generosity of spirit[568] of those citizens; who, placed at the head of an army, the greatness of their spirit raised them above every prince; they esteemed neither kings nor republics; nothing dismayed or frightened them; and having returned afterwards to private [life], they became frugal, humble, careful of their small faculties, obedient to the magistrates, reverent to their superiors, so that it seems impossible that one and the same spirit could suffer such mutation. This poverty lasted also until the times of Paulus Aemilius, which were almost the last happy times of that Republic, where a citizen who with his triumph enriched Rome yet nonetheless kept himself poor. And so much was this poverty still esteemed that Paulus, in honoring someone who had borne himself well in the war, gave a son-in-law of his a cup of silver, which was the first silver he had in his house. One could with a lengthy speech show what better fruits poverty produces than riches, and that

[565] *Operae praetium est audire, qui omnia prae divitiis humana spernunt, neque honori magno locum, neque virtuti putant esse nisi effuse affluant opes*. Livy, III 26.
[566] A *jugerum* measures 28,800 square feet (240 x 120). An acre measures 43,560 square feet (208 feet 8 1/2 inches on the side). Cf. *D* II 7.
[567] *terra*
[568] *animo*

one has honored cities, provinces, sects, and the other has ruined them, if this matter had not been celebrated many times by other men.

26. How a state is ruined because of women.

A sedition arose in the city of Ardea between the patricians and plebeians because of a marriage; for a rich woman having come [to the age] to marry, she was asked for by a plebeian and a noble at the same time; and she not having a father, the guardians wanted to unite her to the plebeian, the mother to the noble. There arose such tumult that it came to arms; whereupon all the nobility armed itself in favor of the nobleman, and all the plebs in favor of the plebeian. So that, having been overcome, the plebs left Ardea and sent to the Volscians for aid; the nobles sent to Rome. The Volscians were first; arriving about Ardea, they encamped. The Romans appeared and enclosed the Volscians between the town and themselves, such that they constrained them, being straitened by hunger, to give themselves up at discretion. And the Romans entered into Ardea and killed all the heads of the sedition, settling the affairs of that city.[569]

There are in this text many things to note. First, one sees how women have been causes of much ruin, and have done great harm to those who govern a city, and have caused many divisions in them; and as one has seen in this our history, the excess done against Lucretia took away the state from the Tarquins,[570] and the other that was done against Virginia deprived the Ten of their authority.[571] Aristotle[572] places among the first causes of the ruin of tyrants their having injured others on account of women, either by raping them, or violating them, or by breaking up marriages, as this part was spoken of at length in the chapter where we treated of conspiracies.[573] I say then that absolute princes and governors of republics have to take no small account of this part, but they ought to consider the disorders that can arise by such an accident, and remedy it in time so that the remedy not bring harm and disgrace to their state or their republic; as happened among the Ardeans who, by letting the rivalry increase among their citizens, led them to divisions among themselves, and wishing to reunite them they had to send for external aid, which is one great beginning[574] of impending servitude. But let us come

---

[569] Livy, IV 9-10.
[570] Livy, I 58-59. See *D* III 2.
[571] Livy, III 44-58. See *D* I 40, 44, 57.
[572] *Politics*, 1303b - 1304a15.
[573] *D* III 6.
[574] *uno grande principio* -- also, "one great principle."

to the other notable thing which is the mode of reuniting the city, which shall be spoken of in the next chapter.

27. How it is one has to unite a divided city, and how that opinion is not true that to keep cities one must keep them divided.

By the example of the Roman Consuls who together reconciled the Ardeati, one notes the mode of how one ought to settle a divided city,[575] of which there is none other, nor ought one cure it in any other way, than to kill the heads of the tumults; for it is necessary to take one of three modes, either to kill them as those did, or remove them from the city, or to make them make peace together under the obligation of not attacking [one another]. Of these three modes, this last one is most harmful, the least certain and the most useless. For it is impossible, where there has run much blood, or other similar injuries, that a peace made by force lasts, each looking at the other in the face every day; and it is difficult that they abstain from injuring one another, since there can arise among them from their daily intercourse new causes of complaints.

One cannot give a better example of this than the city of Pistoia. That city was divided fifteen years ago, as it still is, into Panciatichi and Cancellieri; but it was then in arms and it has now laid them down. After many disputes among them, they came to blood, to the destruction of houses, and the taking of property and every other hostile act. The Florentines, who had to compose them, always used that third mode and always gave rise to greater tumults and greater scandals; such that, wearied, they came to the second mode of removing the heads of the parties, of whom they put some in prison, and others confined in various places, so that the treaty made might stand and it has stood until today. But without doubt the first would have been the safer. But because suchlike executions have [in them] greatness and generosity,[576] a weak republic is not able to do them, and so far are these from it that it is with difficulty led to the second remedy. These are some of those errors which I said at the beginning are made by princes of our times, who have to judge of great things, for they should want to hear how those governed themselves who in ancient times had to judge similar cases. But the weakness of men of the present, caused by their weak education and little knowledge of things, makes them judge that ancient judgments are in part inhuman, in part impossible. They have certain modern opinions of theirs

[575] Livy, IV 10.

[576] *generosità* -- generosity in the now archaic sense which suggests nobility, liberality, and magnanimity.

wholly distant from the truth, as is that which was said by the wise of our city a while ago, that one ought to keep Pistoia with factions and Pisa with fortresses; and they do not see how both these two things are useless.

I wish to leave aside fortresses, for I speak of them at length above,[577] and I wish to discuss the inutility brought about by keeping the towns you have to govern divided. First, it is impossible that you keep friendly to you both those two parties, whether it be the prince or republic that governs them. For it is given by nature to men to take sides in whatever affair[578] divides [them] -- that they be more pleased by this than by that; such that having one part of that town ill-contented, it happens that, with the first war that comes, you lose it, for it is impossible to guard a city that has enemies without and within. If it is a republic that governs it, there is no finer mode of making its citizens wicked and to make your city divided than to have under one's government a divided city; for each part seeks favors and each makes friends through various corruptions, such that there arise two very great inconveniences. One, that you never make them friends, by not being able to govern them well, the government often changing now to this humor and now to that; the other that the attention to parties of necessity divides your republic. Biondo,[579] speaking of the Florentines and the Pistoians, bears witness of this, saying: "While the Florentines planned to reunite Pistoia, they divided themselves." One can therefore easily consider the evil to which this division gives rise.

In 1502, when Arezzo was lost and all the Val di Tevere and the Valdichiana were seized by the Vitelli and the Duke Valentino, there came a Monseigneur de Lant, sent by the king of France to restore to the Florentines all the towns lost: and Lant, finding in every castle men who, on visiting him, said they were of the party of Marzocco,[580] blamed this division greatly, saying that in France, if one of the king's subjects said he was of the party of the king, he would be punished, for such a voice signified nothing else than that in that town there were people enemies to the king, and that king wishes that all the towns be his friends, united and without parties. But all these modes and these opinions divergent from the truth arise from the weakness of whoever is lord, who, seeing that they cannot keep their states with force and with virtue, turn to similar expedients,[581] which sometimes are good for

---

[577] *D* II.24. See *Prince*, XX.

[578] *cosa*

[579] Biondo di Antonio Biondi (Flavius Blondus [1392-1463]), *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum*, decade 2, bk. 9.

[580] The lion which was symbolic of Florence.

[581] *industrie*

something in quiet times; but when adversities come and hard times, they show their fallaciousness.

28. That one should pay attention to the works of citizens, because many times under a pious work is hidden a beginning of tyranny.

The city of Rome being afflicted by hunger, and the public provisions not sufficing to end it, the mind of a certain Spurius Melius, who was a very rich man according to those times, turned to making provisions of grain and of feeding the plebs privately at his pleasure.[582] Through this thing, he had such a concourse of people favoring him that the Senate, thinking of that inconvenience that could arise with his liberality, in order to suppress it before it could pick up more forces, created a Dictator over him and had him killed. Whence one notes that many times works that appear pious[583] and that one cannot reasonably condemn become cruel,[584] and are extremely dangerous for a republic when they are not corrected in good time. In order to discuss this thing more particularly, I say that a republic without citizens of reputation cannot stand, nor can it in any mode govern itself well. On the other hand, the reputation of citizens is the cause of tyranny in republics. Wishing to regulate this thing, it needs to order itself such that the citizens be reputed with a reputation that does good and does not do harm to the city and to its liberty. One ought therefore to examine the modes with which they gain reputation, which are in effect two -- either publicly or privately. The public modes are when one, counseling well, and working better, for the common benefit, has acquired reputation. To this honor one ought to open the way to citizens, and to set up rewards for counsels and works, such that they might be honored and satisfied. When these reputations gained by these ways are open and simple, they will never be dangerous. But when they are gained by private ways, which is the other mode mentioned before, they are most dangerous and altogether harmful. The private ways are: giving benefits to this and to that private [man], lending him money, marrying off his daughters, defending him from magistrates, and doing for him similar private favors, which make men partisans and give heart[585] to one who is so favored of being able to corrupt the public and overpower the laws. A well-ordered republic then ought to open the ways, as was said, to those who seek favors by public ways, and to close them to those who seek [favors] by private ways, as one sees Rome did. For to reward whoever worked well for

[582] Livy, IV 13-14.
[583] *pie*
[584] *crudeli* – on piety and cruelty, see *Prince*, XVII.
[585] *animo*

the public, she ordered triumphs and all other honors that she gave to her citizens. In condemning whoever under various colors by private ways sought to make himself great, she ordered prosecutions. When these were insufficient, because the people were blinded by a species of false good, she ordered the Dictatorship, which with royal arm made those who had gone outside it return to within the mark, as it did in punishing Spurius Melius.[586] And if one of these things is left unpunished, it is apt to ruin a republic, for it is difficult with that example to bring it back afterwards into the true way.

29. That the sins of peoples arise from princes.

Princes ought not complain of any sin committed by peoples whom they have under [their] government, for such sins must need arise either from his negligence or from his being spotted with similar errors. Whoever will discuss peoples who in our times have been held to be full of predations and similar vices, will see that it arises wholly from those who govern them, who were of like nature. The Romagna, before Pope Alexander VI had extinguished those lords who were in command of it,[587] was an example of every [kind] of the most wicked life; for everyone there saw killing and the greatest rapine follow from the slightest cause. This arose from the badness of those princes not, as they have said, from the bad nature of men. For since those princes were poor and wished to live as rich, they were necessitated to turn themselves to much rapine and to do so in various modes; and among other dishonest ways they took, they made laws prohibiting certain actions; then they were the first to give cause for not observing them: they never punished those who did not observe them, unless they saw that many had fallen into the same bias; and then they turned to punishment, not because of zeal for the laws made, but because of greed to collect the penalty. From which arose many inconveniences, and above all this one -- that the people were impoverished and not corrected; and those who had been impoverished contrived to take advantage of those who were less powerful. Whence all those maladies arose which have been said above, the cause of which was the prince. That this is true, Titus Livy shows when he narrates that the Roman legates carrying the gift of booty from the Veientes to Apollo were taken by the pirates of Lipari in Sicily and conducted to that town. Timasetheus, their prince, having learned what the gift was, where they were going and who sent it, he carried himself, although born in Lipari, like a Roman man, and showed the people how impious it was to seize such a gift; so that with

[586] The dictator in this case was Cincinnatus. See *D* III.25, above.
[587] Cf. *Prince*, VII.

universal consensus, he let the Legates go with all their things. And the words of the historian are these: "Timasitheus filled the multitude with religion, which is always similar to the ruler."[588] Lorenzo de' Medici, in confirmation of this observation,[589] says:

> What the lord does is then done by the many,
> For upon the lord all eyes are turned.[590]

30. For a citizen, who wishes in his republic to use his authority to perform some good work, it is necessary first to extinguish envy: and how, with the coming of the enemy, one has to order the defense of a city.

The Roman Senate, learning that all of Tuscany had raised a new levy in order to come destroy Rome, and as the Latins and the Hernici, who in the past had been friends of the Roman people, had allied with the Volscians who were perpetual enemies of Rome, judged that this war should be dangerous. Since it happened that Camillus was Tribune with consular power, [the Senate] thought that it could manage without creating a Dictator, if the other Tribunes, his colleagues, wished to cede to him the totality of the imperium. This the said Tribunes did willingly. "Nor," says Titus Livy, "did they believe that there was any detraction from their majesty in what they yielded to his."[591] Whence Camillus, taking them at [their] word as to this submission, commanded that three armies be enlisted. Of the first, he wished himself to be the head and to go against the Tuscans; of the second, he made Quintus Servilius the head, which he wished to stay close to Rome in order to oppose the Latins and the Hernicians should they move. At the head of the third army he placed Lucius Quintius, and this he enlisted in order to keep watch over the city and defend the gates and the assembly in any eventuality that might arise. Besides this, he ordered that Horatius, one of his colleagues, provide arms and grain and other things required in times of war. He placed Cornelius, another colleague, over the Senate and the public council, so that he might be able to advise about the actions that daily had to be done and executed. In this mode these Tribunes were in those

---

[588] *Timasetheus multitudenem religione implevit, quae semper regenti est similis.* Livy, V 28.

[589] *sentenza*

[590] *E quel che fa 'l signor fanno poi molti,*
Che nel signor son tutti gli occhi volti.
-- La Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo.

[591] *Nec quicquam de maiestate sua detractum credebant, quod maiestati eius concessissent.* Livy, VI 6.

times disposed to command and obey for the safety of the fatherland. It is to be noted from this text that which can be done by a good and wise man, and of how much good he might be the cause, and how many useful things he might be able to do for his fatherland, when by means of his goodness and virtue he has extinguished envy -- which often is the cause of men not being able to work well, that said envy not permitting them to have that authority which is necessary to have in things of importance. One extinguishes this envy in two modes: either by some severe and difficult accident, in which everyone, seeing himself about to perish, postpones every ambition, and runs voluntarily to obey whoever he believes can with his virtue free him; as happened with Camillus who had given of himself so many proofs of being a most excellent man, and having been Dictator three times, and having always administered that rank for the public advantage and not his own utility, he had so brought it about that men did not fear his greatness; and by being so great and so well-reputed, they did not esteem it a shameful thing to be inferior to him (and therefore Titus Livy wisely says these words: "Nor did they..." etc.) In another mode envy is extinguished, when either by violence or the natural order those die who have been your competitors in coming to some greatness and power; who, in seeing you more reputed than they, it is impossible that they ever acquiesce and stay patient. When they are men used to living in a corrupt city, where education has not done them any good, it is impossible that by any accident they ever reverse themselves; but in order to obtain their will and to satisfy their perversity of mind they would be content to see the ruin of their fatherland. To overcome this envy there is no other remedy than the death of those who have it; and when fortune is so propitious to the virtuous man that they die ordinarily, he becomes glorious without scandal, since without obstacle and offense he is able to show his virtue. But when one does not have such luck, he has to think in every way of removing them in advance, and before he does anything else he must needs have modes to overcome this difficulty. He who reads the Bible sensibly will see Moses to have been forced, in wishing to see his laws and his orders go forward, to kill infinite [numbers of] men, who were moved by nothing other than envy to oppose his designs. This necessity was recognized very well by Friar Girolamo Savonarola; it was also recognized by Piero Soderini, gonfalonier of Florence. One could not overcome it because he did not have authority to do it (that was the friar) and because he was not well understood by those who followed him who did have authority. Nevertheless it was not his fault, and his sermons are full of accusations of the wise of the world and invectives against them; for so he called those who were envious and opposed his orders. The other believed that with time,

with goodness, with his fortune, with benefiting others, he could extinguish this envy, seeing himself of so young an age and so many new favorers brought by the mode of his procedure, that he believed that he could surpass however many opposed him through envy, without any scandal, violence and tumult; and he did not know that time could not wait for him, that goodness did not suffice, that fortune varies and that malignity finds no gift which might placate it. Such that both of these two were ruined, and their ruin was caused by not having known how or by not being able to conquer this envy.

Another notable [thing] is the order Camillus gave, both within and without, for the safety of Rome. And truly it is not without cause that good historians, as is this one of ours, put certain cases in detail and distinctly, so that those who follow may learn how they might defend themselves in similar accidents. One ought in this text to note that there is no more dangerous or more useless defense than that which is done tumultuously and without order. That is shown by that third army that Camillus enlisted in order to leave it in Rome as a guard for the city; for many have judged and would [still] judge this part to be superfluous, since that people were ordinarily armed and war-like, and because of this did not need otherwise to be enlisted, but that it would have sufficed to arm them when the need came. But Camillus, and whoever would be as wise as he, judged it otherwise, for he never permitted that a multitude take arms except in a definite order and a definite mode. Therefore from this example one who is placed in charge of guarding a city ought to avoid as a rock the arming of men tumultuously; but he ought have first enlisted and chosen those whom he wishes might arm themselves, those whom they are to obey, where they are to meet, where they are to go, and to command those who are not enlisted that each should stay in their houses to guard them. Those who adopt this order in a city that is attacked can easily defend themselves. He who will do otherwise, will not imitate Camillus, and will not defend himself.

31. Strong republics and excellent men keep the same spirit[592] and their same dignity[593] in every fortune.

Among the other magnificent things that our historian makes Camillus say and do, in order to show what makes up an excellent man, he puts in his mouth these words: "Neither did the dictatorship exalt my spirit, nor did

[592] *animo*
[593] *dignità* - also rank.

exile take it away."[594] From which one sees how great men are always in every fortune of theirs the same; and if it varies, now exalting them, now crushing them, they do not vary, but always keep the same mind firm and in such a mode conjoined with their mode of life that everyone easily recognizes that fortune does not have power over them. Weak men govern themselves otherwise, for they are made vain and are inebriated with good fortune, attributing all the good they have to that virtue which they have never known. Whence it arises that they become insupportable and odious to all those they have about them. From this there proceeds a sudden change of their lot and, when they look it in the face, they fall immediately into the other defect and become vile and abject. Whence it arises that princes so made think in adversities more of escaping than of defending themselves, as those who have badly used good fortune are unprepared for any defense.

This virtue and this vice that I say are found in one man alone, one also finds in a republic, of which as examples there are the Romans and the Venetians. As for the first, no evil lot ever made them become abject, nor did any good fortune make them ever to be insolent, as one manifestly sees after the defeat that they had at Cannae, and after the victory they had against Antiochus. For with that defeat,[595] although it was serious since it was the third, they were never disheartened and sent out armies; they did not wish to ransom their prisoners contrary to their orders; they did not send to Hannibal or to Carthage to ask for peace; but they left behind all these abject things, they thought always of war, arming the old and their slaves for lack of men. When Hanno the Carthaginian learned came to know of this, as was said above,[596] he showed to the Senate what little account they had to take of the defeat at Cannae.[597] Thus one sees that difficult times did not dismay them nor make them humble. On the other hand, prosperous times did not make them insolent; for Antiochus sending spokesmen to Scipio to ask for an accord, before he had come to battle and had been defeated, Scipio gave certain conditions for the peace, which was that [Antiochus] should retire into Syria and leave the rest to the arbitration of the Roman People. Antiochus refused the accord, and coming to battle and losing it, he sent again ambassadors to Scipio, with the commission to take all those conditions that the victor gave them; to which he put forward no other terms than those he had offered before he overcame them, adding these words: "As for the

[594] *Nec mihi dictatura animos fecit, nec exilium ademit.* Livy, VI 7.
[595] Livy, XXI 45-46; XXII 4-7, 43-50.
[596] *D* II 30.
[597] Livy, XXIII 12-13.

Romans, when they are defeated they are not lessened in spirit, nor if they win, do they become arrogant."[598]

The exact contrary of this one saw done by the Venetians who in good fortune grew so insolent, since it seemed to them that they had gained it with virtue that they did not have, that they called the king of France a son of St. Mark. They did not respect the Church, they did not take account of anyone in Italy, and had supposed in their minds of making a monarchy similar to the Roman. Afterwards when good luck abandoned them, and they received a partial defeat at Vailà from the king of France, they lost not only all their state through rebellion, but gave a good part to the pope and king of Spain through a cowardly and abject spirit; and they were so disheartened that they sent ambassadors to the emperor to make themselves tributaries, and wrote the pope a letter full of baseness and submission to move him to compassion. They came to this infelicity in four days and after a partial defeat; for their army having been in combat, while retiring it came into combat and about half were crushed, in such a mode that one of the Provveditori[599] who saved himself arrived at Verona with more than twenty-five thousand soldiers on foot and horse; such that if at Venice there had been in their orders any quality of virtue, they could easily have re-formed and showed their face anew to fortune, and be in time either to win or lose more gloriously and have a more honorable accord. But the baseness of their spirit[600], caused by the quality of their orders not being good in the things of war, made them lose the state and spirit at one stroke. Thus it will always happen to anyone who governs himself as they did. For this insolence in good fortune and abjectness in bad arises from your mode of procedure and the education in which you have nourished yourself; which, when it is weak and vain, renders you like it; when it stands otherwise, it renders you also of another kind, and making you a better knower of the world, it makes you rejoice less over the good and grieve less over the bad. And what is said of one man alone is said of many who live in one same republic, who are made [according] to that perfection that the mode of life of that [republic] has.

And although at another time I have said that the foundation of all states is good militia,[601] and that where there is none there can neither be good laws nor any other good thing, it does not seem to me superfluous to repeat it, for at every point, in reading this history, one sees this necessity

---

[598] *Quod Romani si vincuntur, non minuuntur animis, nec, si vincunt, insolescere solent.* Livy, XXXVII 45.

[599] There were two officials who were superintendents of war, but Machiavelli is apparently referring to the commander of the army, Niccolò Orsini, Count of Pitigliano. See *Prince*,XII.

[600] *animo*

[601] *Prince*, XII

appear. One sees that a militia cannot be good if it is not trained, and one cannot have it trained if it is not composed of your subjects, because it is not always at war nor can it be. One must therefore be able to train it in times of peace, and with others than [one's own] subjects one cannot do such training on account of the expense. Camillus went, as we said above, with the army against the Tuscans; and his soldiers having seen the greatness of the army of the enemy they were wholly dismayed, since they seemed so inferior that they would be able to sustain its impetus. When this poor disposition of the camp came to the ears of Camillus, he came out and showed himself, and going about speaking to these and those [soldiers in the camp, he took this opinion out of their head and, finally, without otherwise ordering the camp said: "What each has been taught or is accustomed to, let him do it."[602] He who considers well this expedient[603] and the words said to them in order to inspirit them to go against the enemy, he will consider how one could not say or do any of those things to an army that had not first been ordered and trained in peace and in war. For a captain cannot trust or believe that those soldiers who have not learned to do anything might do anything that would be good. And if they were commanded by a new Hannibal, he would have been ruined under them. For a captain cannot be in every part while he fights a battle, and, if he has not beforehand so ordered every part that men might have his spirit[604] and have as well his orders and his mode of procedure, it must needs be of necessity that he is ruined. If then a city will be armed and ordered as was Rome, and if every day its citizens, individually and publicly, might have occasion to make a test of their virtue and the power of fortune, it will happen that always and in every circumstance they will be of the same mind[605] and will maintain that same dignity of theirs. But when they are disarmed, and depend alone on the impetuses[606] of fortune and not on their own virtue, they vary with its variations, and will always give an example of themselves such as that given by the Venetians.

32. What modes some have taken to disturb a peace.

When two colonies, Circeii[607] and Velitrae,[608] rebelled against the Roman People, under the hope of being defended by the Latins, and

---

[602] *Quod quisque didicit, aut consuevit, faciet*. Livy, VI 7.
[603] *termine*
[604] *spirito*
[605] *animo*
[606] *impeti* -- i.e., the sudden and violent motions of fortune.
[607] Livy, VI 21.
[608] Livy, VI 13.

afterwards, the Latins being conquered, and now lacking that hope, many citizens counseled that spokesmen should be sent to beseech the Senate. This plan was upset by those who had been authors of the rebellion, who feared that all of the punishment would fall upon their heads. To remove the way to every discussion[609] of peace, they incited the multitude to arm themselves and overrun the Roman borders. And truly, whenever anyone wishes that either a people or a prince wholly remove the mind for an accord, there is no other remedy truer or more certain than to make them do some grave wickedness against the one with whom you wish they would not make an accord. For the fear of that punishment, that seems to him to be deserved for the error committed, will always keep it at a distance. After the first war the Carthaginians had with the Romans, the soldiers the Carthaginians had employed in the war in Sicily and Sardinia, went to Africa when the peace had been made. Not being satisfied with their stipend, they turned their arms against the Carthaginians, and establishing two heads for themselves, Matho and Spendius, they seized many towns from the Carthaginians and sacked many. The Carthaginians, in order to try first every other way than that of fighting, sent to them Hasdrubal, their citizen, as ambassador, whom they thought to have some authority with them, since he had formerly been their captain. Upon his having arrived, Spendius and Mathius to oblige those soldiers not to hope ever again to have peace with the Carthaginians, and with this obligate them to the war, persuaded them that it would be better to kill him with all the Carthaginian citizens that they had with them as prisoners. Whence they not only killed them, but first tortured them with a thousand torments, adding an edict to this crime that all the Carthaginians that they took in the future would be killed in a similar mode. That deliberation and the execution made that army cruel and obstinate against the Carthaginians.

33. It is necessary, to win a battle, to make an army confident both in itself and in its captain.

To wish that any army win the battle it is necessary to make it confident in such a mode that it believes it ought in every mode to win. The things that make it confident are that it be armed and ordered well, [and] that each would know the other. Nor can this confidence or this order arise except in those soldiers who were born and have lived together. It must needs be that the captain be esteemed of such quality that they may be confident of his prudence, and they will always be confident when they see

[609] *ragionamento* -- lit., reasoning

him to be ordered, solicitous, and spirited,[610] and that he takes good care of, and with reputation, the majesty of his rank. He always will maintain it, when he punishes them for errors and does not fatigue them in vain, observes promises to them, shows with ease the way to winning -- concealing or making light of those things that from afar might show dangers. These things, observed well, are the great cause of the army's trust and, trusting, it wins. The Romans used to make the armies obtain this confidence by way of religion, whence it arose that with auguries and auspices they created Consuls, conscripted [troops], sent forth their armies and came to battle. No good and wise captain ever attempted any skirmish without having done one of these things, judging that he could easily lose it, unless the soldiers understood beforehand that the Gods were on their side. When any Consul, or any other captain of theirs, would enter combat without the auspices, he would be punished as they punished Claudius Pulchrus.[611] Although this part is known in all the Roman histories, nonetheless it is given more certain proof by the words Livy uses in the mouth of Appius Claudius, who, complaining to the people of the insolence of the plebeian Tribunes, and showing that through them the auspices and other things pertinent to religion were being corrupted, said thusly: "It is permitted now that they mock religion. What does it matter, if the chickens do not eat, if they are slow to leave the coop, if a bird cries? These are little things; but our ancestors by not contemning these little things made this republic the greatest."[612] For in these little things is that force that keeps the soldiers united and confident, which is the first cause of every victory. Nevertheless, it is needful that these things be accompanied by virtue, otherwise they are worthless. The Praenestines, having sent out their army against the Romans, encamped on the banks of the river Allia, in a place where the Romans had been defeated by the French. They did this in order to give assurance to their soldiers and to dismay the Romans by the fortune of the place. Although this plan of theirs was a likely [one] for those reasons that have been discussed above, nonetheless the end of the thing showed that true virtue does not fear every little accident. This the historian says extremely well with these words placed in the mouth of the Dictator, who spoke with the Master of Horse thusly: "You see that they, depending on fortune, have encamped on the Allia. But

---

[610] *animoso*

[611] See *D* I 14.

[612] *Eludant nunc licet religiones. Quod enim interest, si pulli non pascentur, si ex cavea tardius exiverint, si occinuerit avis? Parva sunt haec; sed parva ista non contemnendo, maiores nostri maximam hanc rempublican fecerunt.* Livy, VI 41.

you, trusting in arms and spirit, are to attack the center of the line."[613] For a true virtue, a good order, an assurance obtained from many victories cannot be extinguished by things of little moment, nor can a vain thing make them fearful, nor a disorder harm them -- as one clearly saw when the two Manlii, consuls against the Volsci, having rashly sent out a part of the camp to plunder, it came about that those who were sent out and those who remained found themselves besieged at the same time, and it was not the prudence of the Consuls but the virtue of the soldiers themselves that freed them from that danger. Upon which Titus Livy says these words: "The soldiery, even without a leader, by their firm virtue was saved."[614] I do not wish to omit an expedient[615] used by Fabius, when for the first time he entered Tuscany with his army, in order to give it confidence, judging such assurance to be the more necessary because it was being conducted into a new country against new enemies. Speaking before the combat to the soldiers, and having told them that there were many reasons through which they could hope for victory, he said that he could say certain good things to them whereby they could see the certainty of victory, were it not dangerous to reveal them. This mode as it was wisely used, merits to be thus imitated.

34. What fame or voice or opinion makes the people begin to favor a citizen; and if the people distributes the magistracies with greater prudence than a prince.

We spoke at another time of how Titus Manlius, who was called Torquatus, saved his father, Lucius Manlius, from an accusation that had been made against him by Marcus Pomponius, the tribune of the plebs.[616] Although the mode of saving him had been somewhat violent and extraordinary, nonetheless that filial piety was so pleasing to the universal, that not only was he not reproved, but having to make military Tribunes, Titus Manlius was elected in the second place. Because of that success, I believe it would be well to consider the mode of judging men that the people have in their distributions, and from what we see how much of what is concluded above is true -- that the people is a better distributor than a prince.[617]

---

[613] *Vides tu, fortuna illos fretos ad Alliam consedisse: at tu, fretus armis animisque, invade mediam aciem.* Livy, VI 29.
[614] *Militum etiam sine rectore stabilis virtus tutata est.* Livy, VI 30.
[615] *termine*

[1] *D* I 11.
[617] *D* I 58.

I say then that the people in its distribution follows what is said of one through public voice and fame, when it knows nothing of him otherwise from noteworthy deeds; or through some preconception or opinion that it has of him. These two things are caused either by the fathers of these, by having been great and worthy men in the city it is believed that their sons should be like them, at least so long as their deeds do not indicate the contrary, or it is caused by the modes of the one of whom they speak. The best modes that these can take are to keep company with serious men of good habits and reputed by everyone to be wise. For there is no greater indication that one can have of a man than the company he usually keeps; one who usually keeps company with decent men deservedly acquires a good name, for it is impossible that he not be somewhat like them. Or truly this public fame is acquired by some extraordinary and notable action, even though private, in which you have honorably succeeded. Of these three things that give a good reputation to one at the beginning, none is better than this last one; for the first which depends on relatives and fathers is so deceiving that men are very slow in being influenced by it and it is soon consumed when the virtue characteristic of the one being judged does not match it. The second, in which you are made known by way of your practices is better than the first but is much inferior to the third; for as long as one does not see any sign that arises from you, your reputation is founded on opinion, the which it is very easy to wipe clean. But with the third, since it originates from, and is founded on, fact and your work, you are given at the beginning such a name that it well must needs be that you do many things contradicting it if you wish to annul it. Men, therefore, who are born in a republic ought to take this approach, and to contrive that with some extraordinary work begin to raise themselves. In Rome, many in their youth did this, either by the promulgation of a law directed to a common benefit, or by prosecuting some powerful citizen as a transgressor of the laws, or by doing some such similar notable and new things of which there would be talk. Not only are suchlike things necessary in order to begin to give oneself reputation, but it is also necessary in order to keep and increase it. In order to do this, one must needs renew them, as did Titus Manlius through the whole of his life; for, having defended his father so virtuously and extraordinarily, and by this action obtained his first reputation; after some years he fought with that Frenchman, and took from the corpse that collar of gold that gave him the name Torquatus. This did not suffice, for later, in mature age, he killed his son for having fought without permission, although he had overcome the enemy.[618] These three actions gave him a greater name at that

[618] Livy, VII10; VIII 7.

time and through all the centuries have made him more celebrated than did any triumph or any other victory, with which he was as adorned as any other Roman. And the cause is that in those victories Manlius had very many similars, [but] in these particular actions he had either very few or none.

All the triumphs of Scipio the Elder did not bring him as much glory as that which was given when he defended his father on the Ticinus while still very young; or as that given to him after the defeat at Cannae, when he spiritedly[619] with sword unsheathed made many Roman youths swear that they would not abandon Italy, as they already had deliberated among themselves. These two actions were the beginning of his reputation, and served as steps to the triumphs of Spain and Africa. This opinion of him even increased when in Spain he sent back the daughter to the father and the wife to the husband.[620] This mode of procedure is necessary not only for those citizens who wish to acquire fame by obtaining honors in their republic, but is also necessary to princes in order to maintain their reputation in their principate; for nothing makes him more esteemed as when gives of himself rare examples with some rare deed or saying conforming to the common good, which shows the lord as magnanimous or liberal or just, and that this be such that it may be reduced into a sort of proverb among his subjects.

But to return whence we began this discourse, I say that the people, when it begins to give a rank to one of its citizens basing itself on one of the three causes written above, does not badly base itself. But then when there are many examples of the good conduct of one that make him more known, it has a better basis, for in such a case it can almost never be deceived. I speak only of those ranks that are given to men in the beginning before they come to be known through a firm experience, or when they pass from one action to another dissimilar to it. Whence, as to false opinion and as to corruption, they always make fewer errors than do princes. Although it is possible that peoples might be deceived by the fame, the opinion, and the works of one man, estimating them to be greater than in truth they are, it would not happen to a prince, because he would be told and be warned by whoever counsels him. In order that peoples might not also lack these counsels, good orderers of republics have ordained that when they have to create the highest ranks of the city, where it would be dangerous to place insufficient men, and when it is seen that the popular fancy is directed to create someone who would be insufficient, it is lawful for any citizen, and glory is to be ascribed to it, to make public in the councils the defects of that one; so that the people not being in lack in its knowing might be able better to judge. And

[619] *animosamente*

[620] See above *D* I.11, III.20. Livy, XXI 46; XXII 53; XXVI 50.

that this was usually done in Rome, the oration of Fabius Maximus bears witness which was made to the people during the Second Punic War; when, in the creation of the Consuls, favor turned to creating Titus Otacilius; and Fabius, judging him to be insufficient to govern the consulate in those times, spoke against him showing his insufficiency, such that [Fabius] took away from him that rank and turned the popular favor to one who merited it more than he.[621] Peoples judge, therefore, in the election of magistrates, according to the truest countersigns of men they can have, and when they are able to be counseled as are princes, they err less than princes; and the citizen who wishes to begin to have the favors of the people ought [do so] with some notable act, as did Titus Manlius, gaining them to himself.

35. What dangers are borne in making oneself the head in counseling a thing, and the more it has of the extraordinary, the greater the dangers that are run.

How dangerous a thing it is to make oneself the head of a new thing that appertains to many, and how difficult it is to manage and complete it, and when completed to maintain it, would be too long and too high a matter for discussion. Therefore, reserving it for a more convenient place, I shall speak only of those dangers that citizens bear, or those who counsel a prince to make himself the head of a grave and important deliberation in such a mode that all the counsel concerning it is ascribed to them. For since men judge things by the end, all the evil that results from them is ascribed to the author of the counsel, and if good results, he is commended; but the reward is by far no counterpoise to the harm. The present Sultan, Selim, called the Grand Turk, having prepared to make an enterprise of Syria and Egypt (according to that reported by some who come from his lands), was exhorted by one of his pashas, whom he kept on the borders of Persia, to go against the Sophy.[622] Moved by this counsel, he went with a very great army on that enterprise, and arriving in a very large country where there were many deserts and few rivers, and finding those difficulties that had already ruined many Roman armies, he was in such a mode crushed by them that he lost there a great part of his host through hunger and disease, even though he had come out on top in the war. Such that, irate with the author of the counsel, he killed him. One reads of many citizens who have encouraged an enterprise and, because it had a bad end, have been sent into exile. Some Roman citizens made themselves heads so that a plebeian Consul might be

[621] Livy, XXIV 10. The one who merited it more than Titus Otacilius was Fabius himself.
[622] The Shah of Persia.

established in Rome. It happened that the first who went out with the armies was defeated; upon which those counselors would have come to some harm, if that party in whose honor such a deliberation was made had not been so strong.[623]

This is a thing, then, most certain that those who counsel a republic and those who counsel a prince are placed between these anxieties:[624] if they do not counsel without respect the things that seem to them useful either for the city or for the prince, they fail in their duty; if they so counsel them, they put themselves in danger of life and state, since all men are blind in this [in that they] judge good and bad counsels by the end. Thinking in what mode they could escape either this infamy or this danger, I do not see that there is any other way than to take things moderately, and not to take anything as one's enterprise, and to speak one's opinion without passion, and without passion modestly to defend it, in such a mode that if the city or the prince follows it, he follows it of his own will, and it will not seem that he was dragged there by your importunity. When you do thus, it is not reasonable that a prince and a people should wish you ill because of your counsel, since it was not followed against the wishes of many. For what brings danger is where there are many who have opposed it, who, then, with the unhappy end, come together to bring you to ruin. And if in this case one lacks that glory that is acquired in being alone against many to counsel a thing when it comes to a good end, there are to be found two advantages. The first, that it lacks danger; the second is that if you counsel a thing modestly, and because of opposition your counsel is not taken and from the counsel of others there follows some downfall, it results in your very great glory. Although your city or your prince cannot enjoy the glory that is acquired from evils, nonetheless one has to admit that it is of some account.

Other counsel I believe cannot be given to men on this part; for to counsel them that they be silent and not speak their opinion would be a useless thing for the republic or for the prince, and they would not escape danger; for in a short time they would be suspected, and what happened to those friends of Perseus, the king of Macedon, could also happen to them. He had been defeated by Paulus Aemilius, and fleeing with a few friends, it came about that in reviewing past things one of them began to tell Perseus of the many errors done by him which had been the cause of his ruin. Upon this, Perseus, turning to him, said, "Traitor, so you have put off telling me until now when I have no more remedy." Upon these words, he killed him with his own hands. Thus did the man bear the penalty of having been silent

[623] *gagliarda*, also bold or rash. Livy, VI 42; VII 1.
[624] *angustie* -- lit., anguish.

when he ought to have spoken, and of having spoken when he ought to have been silent; he did not escape danger by not having given counsel. Therefore I believe that one must keep and observe the terms written above.

36. The causes as to why the French have been and still are judged in battles to be in the beginning more than men and after to be less than women.

The ferocity of that Frenchman who challenged any Roman on the banks of the river Anio to fight with him, then the fight between him and Titus Manlius,[625] makes me remember that which Titus Livy says many times: that the French are at the beginning of the fight more than men and in the battle that follows they become less than women.[626] Thinking about whence this arises, many believe that it is their nature which makes them do thus, which I believe to be true. But it is not so that this nature of theirs, which makes them ferocious at the beginning, could not in such a mode be ordered by art that it might maintain itself ferocious up to the end.

Wishing to prove this, I say that are three kinds[627] of armies: one where there is fury and order, for from that order there rises both fury and virtue, as it did from that of the Romans; for one sees in all the histories that in that army was a good order that had introduced into it a military discipline [that lasted] for a long time. For in a well-ordered army no one should do any work that is not regulated; and one will find that in the Roman army, because of this [good order] (which, since it conquered the world, all other armies should take as an example) it did not eat, it did not sleep, it did not go a-whoring,[628] they did not do any action either military or domestic without the order of the consul. For those armies that did otherwise are not true armies, and if they had any results they had it through fury and impetuosity and not through virtue. But where ordered virtue uses its fury with the modes and the times, no difficulty dismays it nor does it fail in spirit,[629] for good orders renew spirit and fury, nourishing the hope of winning, which is never lacking so long as the orders stand solid. The opposite happens in those armies where fury is not ordered, as are the French, who then lacked it in combat; for not succeeding in winning with their first impetus, and that fury of theirs in which they placed their hopes not being sustained by an ordered

---

[625] Livy, VII 9.
[626] Livy, X 28.
[627] *ragioni* -- lit., reasons
[628] Allan Gilbert points out the Giunta edition of 1532 reads *mercantava* (trading) not *meritricava* (whoring). *Chief Works* I, p. 510.
[629] *animo*

virtue, not having anything outside of it on which they might rely, they failed as that cooled. The Romans, on the contrary, being less fearful of dangers because of their good orders, not being hesitant about victory, fought with firmness and obstinacy with the same spirit and the same virtue from the beginning to the end; moreover, stimulated by arms, they always [became] inflamed. The third quality of armies is where there is neither natural fury nor accidental order, as are our Italian armies of our times, which are wholly useless; and if they do not happen upon an army which by some accident runs away, they never win. Without adducing other examples, one sees every day that they give proof of their not having any virtue. And because with the testimony of Titus Livy everyone might learn how a good militia ought to be made, and how a bad one is made, I wish to adduce the words of Papirius Cursor, when he wished to punish Fabius, the master of the horse, when he said: "None would have respect for men or for the Gods; neither the edicts of the generals nor the auspices would be observed; the soldiers without leave would wander about in peaceful as in hostile [territory], oaths would be forgotten, on their own authority they would dismiss themselves from service; they would leave the standards unattended; they would not assemble on command; and they would fight, not distinguishing between day or night, a good or bad place, with or without orders of the general; they would not observe signals or orders -- like a band of robbers, blind and fortuitous, rather than a solemn and consecrated militia."[630] One might by this text easily see, therefore, if the militia of our times is blind and fortuitous, or consecrated and solemn, and how much it lacks any similarity to that which one can call a militia, and how far it is from being full of fury and ordered as was the Roman, or only full of fury as was the French.

37. If small battles before the main battle are necessary; and, wishing to avoid them, how one should come to know a new enemy.

It appears that in the actions of men, as we have discoursed upon at another time, one finds, besides the other difficulties, that in wishing to conduct a thing to its perfection that the good is always in propinquity to some evil, which so easily is born with that good that it seems impossible to

[630] *Nemo hominum, nemo Deorum verecundiam habeat; non edicta imperatorum, non auspicia observentur: sine commeatu vagi milites in pacato, in hostico errent, immemores sacramenti, licentia sola se ubi velint exauctorent; infrequentia deserant signa; neque conveniatur ad edictum, nec discernantur interdiu nocte, aequo iniquo loco, iussu iniussu imperatoris pugnent; et non signa, non ordines servent; latrocinii modo, caeca et fortuita, pro solemni et sacrata militia sit.* Livy, VIII 34.

fail to have the one wishing for the other. One sees this in all the things that men work upon. Therefore one acquires the good with difficulty, unless you are aided by fortune in such a mode that she with her force overcomes this ordinary and natural inconvenience. I have been reminded of this by the combat between Manlius and the Frenchman, where Titus Livy says: "This fight had a great consequence on the issue of the whole war, for the army of the Gauls, deserting their camp in trepidation, crossed over into Tiburtine lands and then into Campania."[631] I therefore consider on the one side that a good captain ought wholly to avoid working anything which, though while it is of little moment, could have bad effects on his army, for to commence a battle, where all forces are not worked and risk therein all fortune, is a thing wholly temerarious, as I said above when I condemned the guarding of passes.[632]

On the other part, I consider how wise captains, when they come to meet a new enemy that is reputed, are necessitated before they come to battle to make tests of their soldiers against enemies with light skirmishes, so that, by beginning to know and deal with them, they lose that terror that fame and reputation have given to them. This part in a captain is most important, for it seems to have in itself almost a necessity that constrains you to do it, since you seem to go to a manifest defeat, without first having, with small tests, removed from your soldiers that terror that the reputation of the enemy has placed in their minds.

Valerius Corvinus was sent by the Romans with armies against the Samnites, new enemies, and they in the past had never tested their arms one against the other; whence Titus Livy says that Valerius made the Romans have some light skirmishes with the Samnites: "That they would be frightened neither by the new war nor the new enemy."[633] Nonetheless it is a very serious danger that if your soldiers are defeated in these skirmishes that fear and cowardice increase in them, and there might follow effects contrary to your plans, such that you dismay them when you planned to assure them. So much is this one of those things that has the evil in such propinquity to the good, and so much are they conjoined together, that it is an easy thing to take the one believing that one is taking the other. On this I say that a good captain ought to watch with all diligence that there does not arise anything that by an accident might take the spirit[634] out of his army. What can take away its spirit is to begin by losing; and therefore one ought to guard against

---

[631] *Tanti eas dimicatio ad universi belli eventum momenti fuit, ut Gallorum exercitus, relictis trepide castris, in Tiburtem agrum, mox in Campaniam transierit.* Livy, VII 11.
[632] *D* I 23.
[633] *Ne eos novum bellum, ne novus hostis terreret.* Livy, VII 32.
[634] *animo*

small skirmishes, and not permit them unless there is a very great advantage and the hope of certain victory. One ought not make an attempt to guard passes where one cannot have one's whole army. One ought not guard towns unless, in losing them, one's ruin follows of necessity. Of those he guards, to order himself in a mode such that, with their garrisons and the army, he might, in dealing with the siege, employ all his forces. The others should be left undefended; for every time that one loses a thing that is abandoned, and the army is still together, one does not lose one's reputation in the war nor the hope of winning it. But when one loses a thing that you have planned to defend, and everyone believes that you were defending it, then is there harm and loss, and you have, like the French, through a thing of little moment almost lost the war.

Philip of Macedon, the father of Perseus, a military man of high qualities in his times, when attacked by the Romans, abandoned and destroyed much of his countryside which he judged that he could not guard; for he, by being prudent, judged it to be more pernicious to lose reputation by not being able to defend that which he set out to defend, than, by leaving it a prey to the enemy, to lose it as a thing ignored.[635] The Romans, after the defeat of Cannae, when their affairs were distressed, refused to aid many of their dependents and subjects, authorizing them to defend themselves as best they could.[636] These policies were much better than to take up their defense and then not be able to defend them; for with the latter policy one loses friends and forces, and with the former friends only. But turning to small skirmishes, I say that if a captain is perhaps constrained by the newness of enemy to make such a skirmish, he should do it when he has such an advantage that there is no danger of losing it; or indeed to do as Marius did (which is the better policy), when he went up against the Cimbri, extremely fierce peoples who came to plunder Italy. Approaching them with great fearfulness because of their ferocity and number, and, because they had already defeated a Roman army, Marius judged it necessary, before he came into battle, to work something by which his army could set aside that terror and fear that the enemy had put in them; and as he was a most prudent captain, he more than once gathered his army in a place where the army of the Cimbri had to pass. Thus he wished that his soldiers, from within the fortress of their camp, should look and accustom their eyes with the sight of that enemy; such that, seeing a disordered multitude, loaded down with baggage, with useless arms and some disarmed, they would reassure

[635] Livy, XXXII 13.
[636] Livy, XXIII 5.

themselves and become desirous of battle.[637] That policy, as was by Marius so wisely taken, should be thus by others be diligently imitated in order not to run those dangers that I speak of above, and not to do as did the French: "Who, frightened by a little thing of no weight, crossed over into Tiburtine lands and into the Campania."[638] And because we have cited Valerius Corvinus in this discourse, I wish, by means of his words, to show in the following chapter what the make of a captain ought to be.

38. How a captain in whom his army can have confidence ought to be made.

Valerius Corvinus, as we said above, was with his army, [campaigning] against the Samnites, new enemies of the Roman people, whereupon in order to assure his soldiers and make them know the enemy, he had them engage in certain light skirmishes; and when this did not suffice, he decided to speak to them before the battle, and he showed with complete effectiveness how they ought esteem little their enemies, citing his soldiers' virtue and his own. Whence one can note, by the words that Livy makes him say, the make of a captain in whom the army might have confidence, which words are these: "Then also you should consider under whose leadership and guidance they would have to fight, whether he was to be heard only as a splendid exhorter, warlike in words but inexpert in military deeds, or one who himself knows how to handle weapons, go before the standards, and know whither to turn in the press of battle. My deeds, not my words, soldiers, I wish you to follow; and look to me, not only for instruction but for example; I, who, with my right hand, have obtained three consulates and the highest praise."[639] These words, considered well, teach everyone how one ought to proceed in wishing to take the rank of captain; and he who will do otherwise, will find that in time that rank, when through fortune or ambition he might be conducted there, will take away and not give him reputation. For it is not titles that make men illustrious, but men titles. One ought also, at the beginning of this discourse, consider whether great captains have used extraordinary terms to make firm the spirits[640] of a veteran army, when

---

[637] Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, xi-xiv.

[638] *Qui ob rem parvi ponderis trepidi, in Tiburtem agrum et in Campaniam transierunt.* Livy, VII 11.

[639] *Tum etiam intueri, cuius ductu auspicioque ineunda pugna sit: utrum qui audiendus dumtaxat magnificus adhortator sit, verbis tantum ferox, operum militarium expers: an qui et ipse tela tractare, procedere ante signa, versari media in mole pugnae sciat. Facta mea, non dicta vos, milites, sequi volo, nec disciplinam modo, sed exemplum etiam a me petere, qui hac dextra mihi tres consulatus, summamque laudam peperi.* Livy, VII 32.

[640] *animi*

confronted with enemies [to whom they are] unaccustomed; much more greatly do they need to use industry, if they command a new army which has never looked the enemy in the face. For if a strange enemy puts terror into an old army, so much the more should any enemy do so to a new army. Still one sees many times good captains having overcome all these difficulties with high prudence, as did that Roman Gracchus and Epaminondas, the Theban, of whom we have spoken at other times, and that with new armies they overcame veteran and most experienced armies.[641]

The modes that they took was to take several months to exercise them in sham battles and accustom them to obedience and to order, and afterwards they employed them with the highest confidence in true combat. No military man ought therefore to be diffident about not being able to form good armies, when there is no lack of men; for that prince who abounds in men and lacks soldiers, ought complain of his own laziness and little prudence and not the baseness of men.

39. That a captain ought to be a knower of sites.

Among other things necessary to a captain of armies is the knowledge of sites and countrysides, for without this knowledge, both general and particular, a captain of armies cannot work anything well. Because all the sciences need practice when one wishes perfectly to possess them, this is one that requires very great practice. This practice, or better this particular knowledge, is acquired more by means of the hunt than by any other exercise.[642] Therefore the ancient writers said that those heroes who governed the world in their times were brought up in the woods and on the hunt; for the hunt, besides [giving] this knowledge, teaches infinite things that are necessary in war. Xenophon, in the life of Cyrus, shows that Cyrus, when about to attack the king of Armenia, in planning that exploit reminded his [men] that this was nothing but one of those hunts which they had done many times with him. He reminded those he sent [to lay] ambuscades in the mountains that they were like those who were sent to lay nets on ridges; and to those who scoured the plain that they were like those who went to raise the wild beast from its den, so that it would run itself into the nets.

This is said to show that hunts, according to what Xenophon sanctions, are an image of a war. And because of this such an exercise is to great men honorable and necessary. Nor yet can one learn this knowledge of

[641] On Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, see *D* II 26. On Epaminondas, see *D* I 17, 21; III 13, 18, 38.
[642] See also *Prince*, XIV.

countries in any other more convenient mode that by way of the hunt; for the hunt makes one who engages in it know in particular that country where he exercises. When one has made himself very familiar with a region, he easily then understands all new countrysides; for every countryside and every part of them has some similarity with each other, in such a mode that one easily passes from the knowledge of one to the knowledge of the other. One who has had practice, in one glance knows how that plain lies, how that mountain rises, where that valley goes, and all other similar things, of which he has before made a firm science. And that this is true, Titus Livy shows with the example of Publius Decius, who, when Tribune of soldiers in the army that the Consul Cornelius conducted against the Samnites, and the Consul having gone down a valley where the army of the Romans could have been surrounded by the Samnites, seeing themselves in such danger said to the Consul: "Do you see, Aulus Cornelius, that summit above the enemy? In that fortress is our hope and salvation, if (since the blind Samnites neglect it) without delay we should take it."[643] Before these words said by Decius, Titus Livy says: "Publius Decius, the military tribune, observed a hill which, rising above the pass, threatened the enemy camp; difficult of access for an army on the march with baggage, but not difficult for unencumbered troops."[644] Whereupon having been sent to the top by the Consul with three thousand soldiers, and having saved the Roman army and planning, with the night coming, to leave and save himself and his soldiers too, he makes him say these words: "Come with me, while there is still some light, that we may find out where the enemy has placed guards, and where the way out lies open. Then wrapped in a soldier's cloak so that the enemy would not notice that the leader was moving about, he examined everything."[645] He who will then consider all this text, will see how useful and necessary it is to a captain to know the nature of countrysides; for if Decius had not known and recognized then, he would not have been able to judge the usefulness to the Roman army of taking that high hill, nor would he have been able to know from afar if that hill were accessible or not; and then having conducted himself to the top, wishing to leave it to return to the Consul, with the enemy all about him, he would not have been able to espy from a distance the ways by which they could go and the places guarded by the enemy. Such

[643] *Vides tu, Aule Corneli, cacumen illud supra hostem? arx illa est spei salustisque nostrae, si eam (quoniam coeci reliquere Samnites) impigre capimus.* Livy, VII 34.
[644] *Publius Decius tribunus militum conspicit unum editum in saltu collem, imminentem hostium castris, aditu arduum impedito agmini, expeditis haud difficilem.* Livy, VII 34.
[645] *Ite mecum, ut dum lucis aliquid superest, quibus locis hostes praesidia ponant, qua pateat hinc exitus, exploremus. Haec omnia sagulo militari amictus ne ducem circumire hostes notarent, perlustravit.* Livy, VII 34.

that it was of necessity that Decius had such knowledge perfected, which enabled him to save the Roman army by taking the hill; and afterwards, when besieged, he knew how to find the way of saving himself and those who were with him.

40. That to use fraud in managing war is a glorious thing.

Although the use of fraud in any action is detestable, nonetheless in managing war it is a laudable thing and glorious, and the one who uses fraud to overcome the enemy is praised as much as he who overcomes him with forces. One sees this by the judgment made by those who write lives of great men, who praise Hannibal and others who have been notable in the highest degree for suchlike modes of procedure. And since one reads so many examples of them, I shall not repeat any. I shall say only this, that I do not understand that fraud to be glorious that makes you break faith given and pacts made; because this, though you may sometimes acquire state and kingdom, as has been discussed above,[646] will never acquire glory for you. I rather speak of that fraud that one uses with an enemy who does not trust you, and which properly belongs to the management of war; as did that of Hannibal's, when at the lake of Perugia he pretended to flee in order to surround the Consul and the Roman army; and when, in order to escape from the hand of Fabius Maximus, he set aflame the horns of his herd [of cattle].[647]

Of these kinds of frauds, a similar one was used by Pontius, captain of the Samnites, in order to enclose the Roman army at the Caudine Forks.[648] Having placed his army upon the flanks of the mountains, he sent several of his soldiers dressed as shepherds with a large herd down to the plain. When they were captured by the Romans and asked where the army of the Samnites was, they all agreed, according to the order given by Pontius, in saying that it was laying siege to Nocera. This thing was believed by the Consuls, which led to their being enclosed within the Caudine cliffs, where, on having entered, they were immediately besieged by the Samnites. This victory, gained by fraud, would have been most glorious for Pontius, had he followed the counsels of his father, who wanted that the Romans either be liberally saved or that they be all killed, and that the middle way not be taken: "For it neither provides friends nor takes away enemies."[649] That way has always been pernicious in the things of state, as has been discussed above in another place.[650]

41. That one should defend the fatherland whether with ignominy or with glory, and it is well [if] defended in any mode whatsoever.

---

[646] *D* II 13.
[647] Livy, XXII 4, 16-17.
[648] Livy, IX 2-3.
[649] *Quae neque amicos parat, neque inimicos tollit.* Livy, IX 3.
[650] See *D* II 23, above.

As was said above, the Consul and the Roman army were besieged by the Samnites, and the latter placed most ignominious conditions on the Romans (which were that they wanted them to pass under the yoke and be sent back to Rome disarmed), and since the Consuls were as though stunned by this and the whole army made desperate, Lucius Lentulus, the Roman legate, said that it did not seem to him that they should avoid any part in order to save the fatherland; and since the life of Rome depended on the life of this army, it seemed to him that it should be saved in every mode, and that it is well to defend the fatherland in whatever mode one defends it, whether with ignominy or with glory. For if that army were saved, Rome would have time to cancel the ignominy; if it were not saved, even if it should gloriously die, Rome was lost and her liberty. Thus his counsel was followed.[651] This thing merits being noted and observed by any citizen who finds that he has to counsel his fatherland. For where one is deliberating upon the whole safety of the fatherland, there ought not be any other consideration that pertains, neither of justice nor injustice, of pity or cruelty, of the praiseworthy and the ignominious; but, on the contrary, setting aside every other respect, to follow wholly that part that would save its life and maintain its liberty. This thing is imitated in what is said and done by the French in order to defend the majesty of the king and the power of their kingdom; for they hear no voice more impatiently than the one that says: "This part is ignominious for the king;" for they say that their king cannot suffer shame by any deliberation of his, either in good or adverse fortune; for whether he wins or loses is wholly they say a thing of the king.

[651] Livy, IX 4.

42. That promises made by force ought not be observed.

The Consuls, having returned to Rome with the army disarmed and the ignominy it had suffered, the first in the Senate to say that the peace made at Caudium ought not be observed was the consul, Spurius Postumius. He said that the Romans were not obliged by it, but that he and the others who had promised peace were indeed obliged by it; and therefore the people, in wishing to free themselves from every obligation, had to send him and all the others who had promised as prisoners into the hands of the Samnites. He held to this conclusion with such obstinacy that the Senate agreed to it, and sending him and the others as prisoners to Samnius, they declared to the Samnites that the peace was not valid. In this case Postumius was so favored by fortune that the Samnites did not keep him; and when Postumius returned to Rome, he was given more glory by the Romans than Pontius was among the Samnites for having won.[652] Whence one is to note two things; one, that in any action whatever one can acquire glory. For in victory, it is acquired ordinarily; in defeat, it is acquired either by showing such a defeat not to have come about through your fault, or by immediately doing some virtuous action that cancels it. The other is that it is not shameful not to observe those promises that you have been made to promise by force; and forced promises that concern the public, when force comes to be lacking, are always broken; and this without shame for the one who breaks them. Of this many examples may be read in all the histories, and in present times they may be seen every day. Not only are forced promises not observed among princes when force is lacking, but even all the other promises are not observed when the causes that made them promise are removed. Whether this is a praiseworthy thing or not, and whether a prince ought to observe similar modes or not, is disputed at length by us in our treatise, *De Principe*;[653] therefore nothing will be said on it at present.

43. That men who are born in one province keep for all times almost the same nature.

Prudent men usually say, and not by chance or without merit, that he who wishes to see what has to be, should consider what has been. For all the things of the world in every age have their own counterpart in ancient times. That which arises, since it is done by men, who have and always have had the same passions, must of necessity succeed in the same effect. It is true that

[652] Livy, IX 8-12.
[653] *Prince*, XVIII.

their works are more virtuous now in this province than in that, and more in this one than in that, according to the form of the education from which those people have taken the mode of their life. Knowing future things through the past is also facilitated when one sees that a nation keeps for a long time the same customs, being either continuously avaricious or continuously fraudulent, or having some other such similar vice or virtue. He who will read the things past of our city of Florence, and will also consider that which has occurred in recent times, will find the German and French peoples full of avarice, pride, ferocity and faithlessness, for all these four things have at different times much harmed our city. As for faithlessness, everyone knows how many times money was given to Charles VIII, and how he promised [Florence] to give her back the fortresses of Pisa and never gave them back. In this the king showed his faithlessness and his great avarice. But let us leave aside these fresh things. Everyone must have heard that which occurred in the war that the Florentine people waged against the Visconti, dukes of Milan. Since Florence was deprived of all other expedients, she thought of conducting the emperor into Italy, so that he might assault Lombardy with his reputation and his forces. The emperor promised to come with a large host and take up that war against the Visconti, and to defend Florence from their power, when the Florentines gave him a hundred thousand ducats to raise [the army] and a further hundred thousand when he was in Italy. To these pacts the Florentines consented, and they paid him the first money, and then the second; and, having reached Verona, he turned back without working anything, [saying] the cause to be that he was stopped by those who had not kept the agreements they had among them. In such a mode that if Florence had not been either constrained by necessity or overcome by passion, and she had read and known the ancient customs of barbarians, she would not, either then or many other times, have been deceived by them, since they have always been of one mode and have in every part and with everyone used the same terms; as one sees they anciently did with the Tuscans: who, since they were oppressed by the Romans, having been often put to flight and defeated by them, and since by means of their own forces they could not resist their impetus, agreed with the French, who on this side of the Alps lived in Italy, to give them a sum of money so that they would be obligated to join their armies with them and march against the Romans.[654] Whence it followed that the French, taking the money, did not wish afterwards to take up arms for them, saying that they had not taken it in order to wage war with their enemies, but so that they would abstain from plundering the Tuscan countryside. Thus the Tuscan

[654] Livy, X 10.

peoples, through the avarice and little faith of the French, were left at one stroke deprived of their money and of the aid they had hoped to have from them. One therefore sees, by this example of the ancient Tuscans and that of the Florentines, that the French have used the same terms, and from this one can easily conjecture how much princes are able to trust them.

44. One often obtains with impetuosity and audacity that which would never be obtained with ordinary modes.

When the Samnites were attacked by the army of Rome, and not being able with their army to stand in field breast to breast with the Romans, they decided to leave the towns in Samnium guarded and to pass with their whole army into Tuscany, which was at truce with the Romans, to see if by that passage they would be able through the presence of their army to induce the Tuscans to take up arms again, which they had refused to the [Samnite] ambassadors. In the speech the Samnites made to the Tuscans, to show best the cause that had induced them to take up arms, they used a notable phrase wherein they said: "They had rebelled, because peace is harder for slaves than is war for the free."[655] Thus partly through persuasions, partly through the presence of their army, they induced them to take up arms again. Whence one notes that when a prince desires to obtain one thing from another, he ought, if the occasion permits it, not give him space to deliberate, and act in such a mode that he sees the necessity of quick deliberation; which comes about when the one who is being asked sees that to refuse or to delay gives rise to an immediate and dangerous anger.

One saw this mode well used in our times by Pope Julius with the French,[656] and by Monsieur de Foix, captain of the king of France, with the marquess of Mantua. For Pope Julius, wishing to drive the Bentivogli from Bologna, judged that to do this he had need of the French forces and of the Venetians staying neutral; and, having approached both, bringing back changing and doubtful responses, he decided to make both come round to his opinion by not giving them time. Departing from Rome with as great a host as he could gather, he marched against Bologna, and he sent word to the Venetians to stay neutrals, and to the king of France that he send his forces. Such that since all were constrained by the brief space of time, and since they saw that there would arise a manifest anger in the pope from delay or refusal, they surrendered to his wishes; and the king sent him aid and the Venetians stayed neutrals.

---

[655] *Rebellasse, quod pax servientibus gravior, quam liberis bellum esset*. Livy, X 16.
[656] For Pope Julius's impetuousness, see also *Prince*, XXV.

Monsieur de Foix also, when he was with the army in Bologna, having heard of the rebellion of Brescia and wishing to go and recover that city, had two ways: one through the dominion of the king,[657] which was long and wearisome, and the other a short one through the dominion of Mantua. Not only was he necessitated to pass through the dominion of that marquess, but he must needs enter through certain raised dikes between the marshes and lakes of which that region is full, and which were closed and guarded by fortresses and other means. Wherefore Foix deliberated to go by the shorter [way], and in order to overcome every difficulty he did not give time to the marquess to deliberate; at one stroke he sent his host by that way, and indicated to the marquess that he should send the keys to that passage. Whereupon the marquess, possessed by this sudden deliberation, sent him the keys; which he never would have sent had Foix governed himself more timidly, since that marquess was in league with the pope and the Venetians, and had one of his sons in the hands of the pope, which things gave him many honest excuses to refuse them. But assaulted by this sudden policy, for the causes that have been said above, he yielded them. Thus did the Tuscans with the Samnites, who, because of the presence of the army of Samnium, took up those arms which they had at other times refused to do.

[657] The king of France, Louis XII, who held Lombardy at this time.

45. Whether the better policy in battles is to sustain the attack of enemies and, having sustained it, to strike them; or to assault them with fury from the beginning.

Decius and Fabius were Roman consuls with two armies opposed to the armies of the Samnites and Tuscans; and since they came into combat and battle together, it [permits one] to note in this action which of the two different modes of procedure taken by the two Consuls was the better.[658] For Decius with all his impetus and all his effort attacked the enemy; Fabius only held them, judging a slow attack to be more useful, reserving his impetus to the last, when the enemy had lost the first ardor of combat and, as we say, his *foga*.[659] Hence one sees by the outcome of the thing that the plan of Fabius succeeded much better than that of Decius, who exhausted himself in his first impetus, in such a mode that, seeing his troops were more ready to turn than otherwise, in order to acquire by death that glory that he could not gain through victory, and in imitation of his father, sacrificed himself for the Roman legions. Learning of this affair, Fabius, in order not to acquire less honor by being alive than his colleague had acquired by dying, pushed forward all the forces that he had reserved for such a necessity, whence he carried off a most happy victory. Whence one sees that the mode of procedure of Fabius, is the more secure and more imitable.

46. Whence it arises that a family in a city keeps for a time the same customs.

It appears that not only does one city have certain modes and institutes[660] different from those of another, and procreates men who are either harder or more effeminate, but also that in the same city one sees that such a difference exists in families between one and another. One finds this to be true in every city, and in the city of Rome many examples may be read: for one sees the Manlii to have been hard and obstinate, the Publicoli to be kindly men and lovers of the people, the Appii ambitious and enemies of the plebs, and so of many other families each of which has had its qualities separate from the others. This cannot have arisen solely from blood, for this must vary through the diversity of the marriages, but it necessarily comes from the diverse education in one family and in the other. For that which a young boy of tender years begins to hear said of a thing being good or bad is

[658] Livy, X 27-29.

[659] Lit., his flight; usually translated as "wind," i.e., the velocity of his attack.

[660] *institutì* -- institutes, in the sense of the established laws, precepts, customs and usages of a society.

of great import, for it must needs of necessity make an impression, and it thereafter regulates the mode of procedure in all the periods of his life. If this were not so, it would have been impossible that all the Appii would have the same will and have been moved by the same passions, as Titus Livy notes of many of them;[661] and, finally, one of them having been made Censor, and his colleague having at the end of eighteen months, as the laws provided, laid down the magistracy, Appius refused to lay it down, saying that he could hold it for five years, according to the first laws ordained by the Censors. Although they held many assemblies on this [question], and it generated many tumults, nevertheless there never was a remedy that made him lay it down, though it was against the will of the People and the majority of the Senate. And whoever will read the oration he made against Publius Sempronius, tribune of the plebs, will note there all the Appian insolence, and all the goodness and humanity used by infinite [numbers of] citizens in order to obey the laws and the auspices of their fatherland.

47. That a good citizen for love of the fatherland ought to forget private injuries.

Marcius was consul with the army opposed to the Samnites; and having been wounded in a combat, and because this brought much danger to his people, the Senate judged it to be necessary to send Papirius Cursor there as dictator to make up for the incapacities of the consul.[662] It was necessary that the Dictator be named by Fabius, who was consul with the armies in Tuscany. And fearing, because Fabius was an enemy of his, that he might not wish to name him, the Senators sent two ambassadors to beg him to set aside private hatreds, and that he ought to name [Papirius] for the public benefit. Fabius did this, moved by charity for the fatherland,[663] even though by his silence and in many other modes, he indicated that this nomination distressed him. All those who seek to be held to be good citizens ought to take this as an example.

48. When one sees an enemy making a great error, one ought to believe that there is deceit beneath it.

When Fulvius was left as legate with the army that the Romans had in Tuscany, the Consul having gone for some ceremonies in Rome, the Tuscans in order to see if they could catch him in a trap, set an ambush near

[661] Livy, IX 33-34.
[662] Livy, IX 38.
[663] *carità della patria*

the Roman camp, and sent some soldiers in shepherds' clothing with a large flock; and they made them come into sight of the Roman army. Thus dressed, they came near the stockade of the camp, whereupon the Legate, amazed at their presumption, which did not seem to him reasonable, found a way of uncovering the fraud; and thus the plan of the Tuscans was ruined.[664] It can advantageously be noted here that a captain of armies ought not put faith in an error that one sees an enemy plainly make; for there will always be fraud beneath it, since it is not reasonable for men to be so incautious. But the desire to win often blinds the minds of men, that they see [nothing] other than what seems to be done for them.

The French having won over the Romans on the Allia, and coming to Rome and finding the gates open and without guard, stood that whole day and night without entering [the city], fearing fraud, and not being able to believe that there was such cowardice and lack of counsel in Roman breasts that they would abandon the fatherland.[665] When the Florentines were encamped before Pisa in 1508, Alfonso del Mutolo, a Pisan citizen, was taken prisoner by the Florentines; and he promised that if released he would open one gate of Pisa to the Florentine army. The fellow was set free. Afterwards, in order to put into practice the thing, he came many times to speak with the legates of the [Florentine] commissioners; and he did not come secretly but openly and accompanied by Pisans, whom he left to one side when he spoke with the Florentines. One could therefore have conjectured the duplicity of his mind,[666] because it was not reasonable, had the practise been faithful, that he would have treated with them so openly. But their desire to have Pisa blinded the Florentines in such a mode that they conducted themselves by his order to the Lucca gate, where, to their dishonor, many of their officers and other soldiers[667] were lost because of the double treachery of the said Alfonso.

49. A republic, in wishing to keep it free, has need every day of new [acts of] foresight;[668] and for what merits Quintus Fabius was called Maximus.

It is of necessity, as has been said many other times, that there arise every day in a great city accidents that have need of a physician, and the need to find the wisest physician is in proportion to their importance. And if ever in any city there arose such accidents, they arose in Rome, and strangely and

---

[664] Livy, X 3,4.
[665] Livy, V 39.
[666] *il suo animo doppio* -- i.e., his double intent.
[667] *capi ed altre genti* – lit., heads and other folk,
[668] *provvedimenti* -- lit., "foresights".

unexpectedly -- as was that when it seemed that all the Roman women had conspired against their husbands to kill them; many were found to have been poisoned, and there were many who had prepared the poison to poison them.[669] There was also that conspiracy of the Bacchanals which was discovered at the time of the Macedonian war, which indeed included many thousands of men and women; and if it had not been discovered it would have been very dangerous for that city, or if the Romans had not also been accustomed to punishing errant multitudes; for if one saw none of the other countless signs of the greatness of that Republic and the power of her executions, one sees it by the qualities of the punishments she imposed on him who erred. She did not hesitate to put to death by way of justice a whole legion at once, and a city, and to banish eight or ten thousand men with extraordinary conditions which were not to be observed by one man alone but by many, as happened to those soldiers who had unsuccessfully fought at Cannae, whom she banished to Sicily, commanding them not to dwell in town[670] and to eat standing up.[671]

But of all other executions, the [most] terrible was the decimation of armies, in which by lot one man out of every ten was killed. Nor can one find in the chastising of a multitude a more terrifying punishment than this one; for, when a multitude errs, where is no definite author, one cannot chastise all of them because they are too many. To punish part of them and leave a part unpunished, would be a wrong to those who are punished, and the unpunished would have the spirit[672] to err another time. But killing the tenth part by lot, when all have merited it, whoever is punished bewails his lot; whoever is not punished is fearful that the next time it might fall on him, and keeps himself from erring.

The poisoners and the Bacchanals were punished therefore according to what their sins merited. Although these diseases produce bad effects in a republic, they are not fatal, because one has almost always time to correct them; but there is not such time in those that concern the state, which, if they are not corrected by one who is prudent, ruin the city. There were in Rome, because of the liberality that the Romans used in giving citizenship[673] to foreigners, so many new peoples[674] born that they began to have so great a part in suffrages and the government began to change, moving away from those things and those men where it had been accustomed to go. When

---

[669] Livy, VIII 8.
[670] *non albergassano in terra*
[671] Livy, XXIII 25; XXV 5-7.
[672] *animo*
[673] *civilità*
[674] *genti*

Quintus Fabius, who was censor, perceived this, he placed all these new peoples, from whom this disorder came, into four Tribes, so that they could not, reduced into such small spaces, corrupt all of Rome.[675] This thing was clearly understood by Fabius and he applied, without an alteration, a fitting remedy, which was so well accepted by that citizenry[676] that he merited to be called Maximus.

[675] Livy, IX 46.
[676] *civilità*